



T H E
A N C H O R E T.

VOLUME II.

LETTER XIX.

Miss MUSGRAVE to Miss BEVERLY.

WERE it not for an eager desire, and a longing expectation to know the sequel of the fair Spaniard's history, your ladyship might be assured of receiving my chastisement.—What!—because I have not so large a field wherein to expatiate and exercise my pen, must I be accused of insipid nothingness?—really, Sylvia, this is almost past sufferance:—You might well suppose I should toss up my little saucy face (these are your words I believe) and say, “What airs of importance this girl gives herself!”—*En Verite*, child, you were nearly right; something of that kind did happen, I assure you;—but you were sensible how much you deserved my contempt, and could, therefore, give a shrewd guess how it would be expressed.

Now have I a great inclination to conclude, just at this period, without imparting an occurrence I have met with, that may claim some attention from your important ladyship.—Ay, ay! now comes my turn for supposing, Sylvia,—as, methinks, I can hear you say, (knowing how fond you are of adventures) “Do, my sweet friend, excuse the natural impetuosity of my temper this once, and I will promise to be more humble for

the future."—Well, child, in consideration of this being your first offence, I will extend my wonted compassion—and forgive you; but no more of such daring insults on my inimitable performances, or, if you repeat them, expect utter neglect; and my silence shall be your punishment!—This threat I desire you will receive with all proper submission—no murmurings—for remember what the pathetic Doctor Young says—

“ Lorenzo, to recriminate is just.”

LYDIA Trueman, I assure you, Sylvia, merits a much higher eulogium than your sarcastic ladyship was pleased to honour her with:—I discover new perfections at every interview:—She is my constant companion, as often as I can steal from my accomplished mother and sister, who frequently rally me on my groveling connection! you know that is a favourite word with Lady Susan, who thinks it expresses a just disdain for such objects as she esteems low and contemptible.—What a pity it is, Sylvia, that such elevated ideas should ever descend from their exalted throne, and be levelled infinitely beneath those they pretend to degrade.—But this is talking in parables, you will say;—utterly incomprehensible!—Why, I acknowledge it requires considerable penetration, and, I suppose, you will hardly believe Lady Susan to be the person meant in this enigmatical preamble;—but so she really is, on my word, Sylvia, if there be truth in artless innocence.—I now no longer wonder at Papa's disquiet,—though I do not apprehend he knows the least of a secret I am going to repose in the bosom of my friend. Her visible love of admiration, when engaged in the busy world, joined to the discovery I have now made, occasions me to fear, that a very short time will behold him the most wretched husband that can possibly be imagined.

You may remember, in my last, I mentioned Papa's proposal of our visiting Bath;—of this circumstance I was informed Lydia, during one of our morning rambles, who, on a sudden, said—“ Bath! Miss Emily!”

with such emotion as surprized me:—yet, willing to know the reason, I pretended not to regard her repeating the word with so much energy, but rallied her by saying—“Ay, why not Lydia? what, I suppose your father has implanted in your bosom, an equal detestation for that region of pleasure and amusement, as for the capital?”

“WHY, indeed, Miss Musgrave, (replied the good girl) I believe the dissipation that reigns at both, is often productive of many disagreeable circumstances;—but does Lady Susan propose going?”—“Undoubtedly: (answered I) it was entirely with an intent to amuse her Ladyship that Papa mentioned it;—but why that question? Lydia; do you apprehend any doubt of her ready consent to a proposal so agreeable to her natural love of gaiety?”

HERE, with an expressive shake of the head, she returned,—“It is not for me, Miss Musgrave, to insinuate any thoughts respecting her ladyship’s inclination; but, as I see that my having repeated the name of Bath with involuntary surprise, has occasioned you to apprehend there may be some concealed reason.—I must speak my thoughts more freely; and I confess, that if I were Lady Susan, that place, of all others, should be the last I would visit; especially as she is, at this time, the wife of Sir Robert Musgrave.”—Here she paused—and her words filled me with such alarming fears, that I begged her to unriddle the seeming mystery, and inform me what she knew concerning her ladyship; promising, at the same time, to keep the secret with such discretion, that she should have no reason to accuse herself for imparting it to me.

THE poor girl, with all the appearance of modest diffidence, raising her eyes, said, with a becoming blush, “The friendship you have been pleased to honour me with, dear Miss Emily, demands my most grateful tribute of acknowledgment; and, to prove myself assured of your obliging promise, not to reveal what, as yet, remains inviolable, except to my father and myself, I will relate what you desire to hear.”

So saying, we seated ourselves on the side of a bank, sufficiently retired from a possibility of being overheard, and Lydia began as follows :

“ IN the last illness of Sir Jasper Arundel, my father (on whom the baronet was pleased to confer many favours, and repose much confidence) constantly, by his own desire, attended him.

“ DURING this melancholy period, Lady Susan appeared totally unconcerned ; making frequent excursions to London, and seeming utterly regardless of the indisposition and visible decline of him, whom her duty should have obliged to attend as much as possible.—Yet even for this neglect some palliation may be urged, when we reflect that the inequality of years between them was nearly thirty ; which, joined to the Baronet’s infirmities, rendered their union incompatible:—but though such a disparity might in some measure extenuate neglect, yet it could not excuse a fall from virtue, which her Ladyship stands accused of, from the dying avowal of the Baronet.”

HERE I could not help exclaiming, “ Fall from virtue !—for heaven’s sake, Lydia, recall the word !—sure it cannot be !”—The worthy girl perceiving my emotion, said,—

“ AH, Miss Emily, I am certain such a declaration must sound harsh and displeasing to one susceptible only of virtuous sentiments ;—sorry am I, that undissembled truth obliges me to be the relator of this circumstance ; but you insisted on a candid information, which therefore I must give, or you will have cause, perhaps, hereafter to accuse me with deceiving you.”

THERE was such an appearance of honest frankness in her manner, that I begged her to proceed, which she then did as follows :

“ ONE evening, Sir Jasper having just awoke from a refreshing slumber, asked for his lady, with the appearance of a fond expectation that she was present ; but on my father’s answering in the negative, the worthy old gentleman appeared greatly disturbed, saying,

Unkind imprudent woman! what, does she think much of waiting a few days only?—yes, Trueman, a few, very few, must return thy master to his original dust.—Ungrateful Lady Susan, is it thus you repay my unmerited forgiveness when I surprised you with your guilty paramour at Bath?—Oh Trueman! pursued Sir Jasper, you little know what I have suffered from that adulterous wanton;—if my strength will permit I will tell thee all, that I may be justified as to the binding situation in which I intend to leave her, so shall she hardly have it in her power to render another as wretched as I am.

“THE last time I was at Bath, I heard loud whispers concerning her openly receiving the addresses of one Captain Morton,—a fellow assuming the military title, though regarded by most of the penetrating at that place, only as a noted gambler, destitute of the least merit; yet a volubility of common-place gallantry, uttered with all the effrontery of Hibernian assurance, too often introduced him to the most fashionable societies, among whom my imprudent Lady Susan was the most ready to listen to him; but when first cautioned to beware of this illiterate, arrogant fellow, I could give no credit to the insinuation; for though sensible she loved admiration and applause, yet I could not sink her so low in my esteem, as to harbour the least suspicion against so abject a wretch as Morton. But roused at length by the general voice, I was determined to be on the watch, and by a little stratagem actually surprised them in a situation too flagrant to admit of farther incredulity.

“THE villain soon escaped my vengeance, and, as I afterwards heard, (like a thorough-paced coward) left Bath immediately.—My imprudent wife remained, whom, you may be assured, I upbraided in such terms as her offence merited:—but she having recourse to the arts and insinuations of her sex, softened, by a well-dissembled penitence, and a shew of fondness, my determined rigour;—and in less than an hour I pressed

the lovely, deceitful Lady Susan to my bosom; instead of what, in justice to myself, I should have done,—banished her for ever.

“WE left Bath, by my desire, the day following, being fearful of those malignant whispers scandal ever delights in.

“THIS (continued Sir Jasper) is the truth of that hateful affair:—and, oh! Trueman! how little does she deserve that forgiveness which I bestowed in the hour of her pretended contrition!—In my will, (which was made in those happy hours, when I believed her mind beauteous as her form) I have bequeathed her sole mistress of my fortune, but I am now determined to tie her down to such conditions, as may hinder another fond believing husband from being imposed upon as I have been; for which purpose, Trueman, I insist that you procure, by to-morrow noon, persons proper to execute and witness such alterations as I intend to make in respect to this ungrateful woman.

“BUT alas! (continued Lydia) whether the agitation with which the mind of Sir Jasper then laboured, contributed to augment his illness, or what other cause I cannot determine, but in less than two hours after the above recital, he was seized with violent convulsions, became speechless and insensible, and before morning paid the irrevocable debt to Nature; by which accident the will remained as first made, and her Ladyship became sole executrix and possessor of the Baronet’s vast fortune.”

HERE did Lydia conclude her alarming detail, which you may be sure, Sylvia, occasioned in me an infinite surprize; for though fearful her Ladyship had, by her apparent love of admiration, given cause for slight censures, yet I could not suspect her of so open a violation against the laws of virtue.

NOW could I almost be tempted to turn moralist, and endeavour to expatiate, with becoming dignity, on human frailties, but as I am certain the subject would be greatly superior to my abilities, I shall desist, and leave

the important theme for a more able pen;—yet I cannot help observing, how much I am astonished at Lady Susan's visible satisfaction at our intended tour to Bath; for, as Lydia observes, (unless lost to all sense of shame) that ought to be the last place she should visit.

YET perhaps she imagines, that time and absence has entirely buried in oblivion the remembrance of her indiscretion; but, alas! unless the waters possess the forgetful quality of Lethe, such a hope, I much fear, will be fruitless;—as scandal ever delights in exposing our frailties in so complete a manner, that neither time nor absence can obliterate them from the copious memory of the blackening fiend!

You see, Sylvia, I am actually become immoderately grave; and should I not haste to conclude, I might weary you with solemn remarks and moralizing sentiments; neither of which, as I before observed, are in the least suited to my volatile inclination:—but as I would fain say something expressive of my opinion of Lady Susan's crime, receive the following lines of honest Natt. Rowe.

Too late, alas! her fault she may deplore, }
Too late look back to what she was before, }
She sets, like stars that fall, to rise no more. }

EMILY MUSGRAVE.

LETTER XX.

Miss BEVERLY to Miss MUSGRAVE.

IS it possible, Emily? can it be? can Lady Susan actually deserve the odious character given by Lydia Trueman?—Be not too credulous, nor yield implicit faith to so cruel an assertion;—certainly, was there the least truth in the calumny, her Ladyship could never think of returning to a place, where, as you observe, scandal reigns; and which, on her appearance, would revive the topic of her fatal indiscretion.—Pardon me, Emily,—but I must own I cannot credit the tale, tho'

told by—"artless Innocence."—I could urge some reasons for my disbelief, but the task I have imposed on myself will not permit me to dwell on other subjects; therefore I shall continue fair Clara's history.—I think, in my last, I left her just arrived at the house of Mr. Pellham;—where (said our heroine) I was received with the greatest politeness by the parents of my friend, Olivia.

"THE obliging reception I met with in this new kingdom, greatly contributed to alleviate my despondency, and I remained in this worthy family for some months, inheriting more tranquility than I could possibly have expected; when an event happened, that plunged me again into the most disagreeable situation, and made me conclude, the avenging rod of Omnipotence had not yet ceased to chastise me.

"NEAR a year after my residence in England, Mr. James Pellham, brother to Olivia, arrived at his father's from making (what is styled in England)—the grand tour.—I had heard much of this gentleman from his equally fond parents and sister, who rejoiced at his return, and expressed the utmost delight; which being observed by me, I was willing to appear equally pleased with my obliging friends, and welcomed him also with a sister's affection.

"THIS young gentleman being an only son, and sole heir to a considerable estate, had received every requisite accomplishment to shine in the exalted sphere wherein Fortune had placed him:—A most liberal education was, however deemed insufficient, unless properly finished by travel;—which last part of improvement, I much fear, has been sincerely regretted by many indulgent parents, (of England in particular) who too often find, that instead of a valuable addition to their childrens morals, too often these fashionable tours occasion them to swerve from that rectitude which they ought to preserve.

"THIS remark was evident in Mr. Pellham, who left his native land with every pleasing appearance of

social virtue;—but, alas! returned with principles directly opposite.

“ I WILL not dwell on every minute circumstance, but only observe, that an inordinate love of intrigue (which, I apprehend, he had freely indulged in the gay kingdoms he had visited) was his most prevailing foible, and which he was pleased to exercise against the unhappy Clara.

“ NUMEROUS were the insinuations he used, to effect his cruel purpose; notwithstanding which, he had art enough to conceal, from his parents and sister, the least of his designs.—My behaviour to him, ever cold and reserved, at length irritated him so highly, that one evening, finding me alone, he had the effrontery to threaten me with putting a design in execution, which he assured me he had long intended; saying, with an insulting shew of success, that he should then soon triumph over my stubborn virtue, and oblige me to a more submissive demeanor.

“ IN vain I argued on his infamous intent, calling it the greatest breach of hospitality, and concluded, by threatening to disclose the whole to his parents and sister. He remained unmoved either at my threats or supplications, but left me in a rage, swearing, that let what would be the consequence, he would follow his design and force me to compliance.

“ I WAS no sooner alone, than I threw myself on my knees before that Power I had formerly so much offended; acknowledged the justice of my suffering, yet begged his almighty aid to free me from the threatened danger.

“ GRATITUDE to the parents and sister of this daring youth, forbade me to disturb their repose, by informing them of his insulting usage; I therefore resolved, after mature consideration, to leave their hospitable mansion, and retire to some sequestered retreat, as the most effectual means to avoid his cruel determination.—For this intent, I made a confidant of a young woman who waited on me.—This girl possessed many tender

sensations, and soon promised me her assistance.—She recommended me to her mother, who lived at a small village in the most retired part of Berkshire:—I returned her my sincere acknowledgments, and it was agreed between us, that on her mother's answer to a letter she wrote for that purpose, I should immediately leave London, and seek an asylum in the humble cottage of goody Fairfield.

“MY thoughts were now principally employed how I should account for my flight to Mr. and Mrs. Pellham, and my friend Olivia;—at length, I was determined to leave a letter, intimating, that an unforeseen accident had occasioned my abrupt departure, and obliged me to remain in secret, that my rigid fortune might prove less severe.—This I accordingly did, expressing, with every testimony of gratitude, my infinite obligations; but I forebore the least mention of Mr. Pellham's behaviour, fearful of wounding their friendly bosoms with the anxiety they would have felt at a relation of the disagreeable truth.

“THE thousand pounds I had received from the generous Madame de Beaumont, I had, by the advice of my friend, placed in the public funds; the interest of which little sum was all I had now to live upon. Yet did not this humiliating consideration affect me; my every thought being engaged to elude the cruel design of Mr. Pellham.

“ON the receipt of goody Fairfield's answer to her daughter Sally's letter, I immediately embraced the offer of her receiving me; and, by the help of the good girl, secured a place in the stage coach, which went near the village where my intended hostess resided.—Early in the morning, attended only by my faithful confidant, I quitted London, leaving the letter before-mentioned on the dressing-table;—my cloaths had been conveyed in small parcels to a friend of Sally's, where they were purposely packed up and sent to the inn, directed in the name of Mitchell, which I assumed to prevent a discovery.

" I TOOK an affectionate leave of the good girl, who promised to send me constant word of every thing material that happened, and at four o'clock the coach left the inn, with only one passenger besides myself, an elderly man, having the appearance of an honest farmer, who slept for many hours after we set out, so that I had liberty to enjoy my own sad reflections unmolested.

" RUMINATING on the various incidents which had composed my former life, the trickling tear fell fast; I regarded myself as an outcast from the world, deserted and forlorn.—I took the pictures of my father and my beloved Beaumont, surveyed them by turns—kissed the lifeless images, bedewed them with my tears,—and, in short, indulged the most exquisite silent sorrow that it is possible to imagine.

" THIS reverie of affecting remembrance I enjoyed till the coach stopped at the place where we were to breakfast; after our company was encreased by two more elderly men, who, as I found by their discourse, were going to some neighbouring fair to purchase cattle. They soon became very communicative to my first companion, endeavouring by many rough-hewn compliments to make me the same;—but, alas! my feelings were much too poignant to be trifled with;—therefore, by observing a profound silence, I was soon freed from their rustic solicitations; and about three o'clock reached the place where I was to meet goody Fairfield.

" THE honest dame was ready to receive me; I was pleased with her artless appearance, and soon followed her to the humble dwelling, which was to be my future residence.

" WHEN I had been at this place a few days, I wrote to Madame de Beaumont, giving her an impartial account of each transaction; at the same time I desired her secrecy, and begged to be informed why I was not favoured with answers to two letters I had written since my leaving France, the omission of which had occasioned me much uneasiness.

" IN less than a week I received one from Sally, wherein she informed me that Mr. Pellham no sooner

heard of my flight, than he behaved with all the frenzy of disappointment, carrying his unbounded expressions to such a height, as made the whole family suspect that something more than friendship actuated him, and raised a suspicion in Olivia's breast, that it was on his account I had fled. This occasioned a warm altercation between the brother and sister, when, by some words that escaped the former in the height of resentment, the latter was convinced of the truth.

"SALLY farther said, that every method of threats and promises had been used by Mr. Pellham, for her to discover what she knew of my elopement;—my friend also had questioned her, but she had evaded the least confession or information whatever, and was determined to persevere in the resolution (even to Olivia) unless authorized by me to the contrary.

"I answered this letter, enjoining her to constant secrecy, and a few days after I wrote to Miss Pellham; assuring her that I should never forget our friendship, or the obligations that I had received from her and her worthy parents; and even hinted that a fear of her brother was the reason of my voluntary flight. Yet I could not prevail on myself to impart the name of the place of my retirement, fearing, as she was extremely fond of her brother, that she might some time or other consent to his solicitations, and divulge the secret.

"I NOW remained in this rural retirement unnoticed and unknown; the whole family consisted (besides myself) of honest dame Fairfield and her son, who held a small farm, the produce of which was just sufficient for their maintenance. Here therefore I had ample leisure to meditate on many disagreeable circumstances, which frequently overwhelmed me with affliction, and which to alleviate, I earnestly wished to receive a letter from Madame de Beaumont,—for her silence filled me with fears of a thousand unforeseen accidents.

"I HAD been in this retreat for some months, without any thing material happening, when one morning,

as I was indulging my usual reflections in a small meadow behind the cottage, I was accosted by an elderly lady, who bade me good morrow with so much politeness, as at once both surprised and charmed me, having never observed the least appearance of civilized behaviour in the few persons I had seen since my residence with the honest dame. We soon entered into an united comment on the beauty of the morning, and the sweet tranquillity that reigned at that early hour;—her remarks were conveyed with such elevation of sentiment, expressive of devout gratitude to the Author of Nature for his unbounded liberality, that I listened with delight, and heartily congratulated myself in meeting with this amiable companion, for such I hoped to find her in future.

“BEING thus employed, the time glided so swiftly that I forgot the usual hour of breakfast, till I observed my hostess coming in search of me; I then bade the lady farewell, who, with a most obliging smile, told me that she hoped to have the pleasure of seeing me again the next morning, as she had made that meadow for some time her constant place of rambling at that early hour. I with infinite satisfaction promised to meet her; we then parted, and I followed dame Fairfield to breakfast.”

EXTEND thy gift of patience, Emily, a little time longer, when I hope to conclude what yet remains of our charming Spaniard’s history; for I will, as soon as possible, resume the task.—Till when, Adieu.

IN CONTINUATION.

DO you think, Emily, it will ever be in your power to make proper retaliation for all this torrent of writing? I verily believe that I have already penned more lines than are contained in the marriage articles of the richest heiress in England.—Well, remember my expectations are very sanguine, to know the particulars of your excursion to that region of pleasurable amusement,—Bath. I therefore insist on your compliance, as some return for my unbounded informations; and now to proceed.

“WHEN I was alone with my hostess, (continued Donna Clara) I informed her of my meeting the lady, to which the honest dame replied, As sure as I live, Miss Mitchell, you have seen Madam Whitworth!—Do you know her then?—said I.—Know her, echoed Goody, why the whole country rings of her;—she is the worthiest lady in all Berkshire;—so good,—so charitable to the poor,—and withal so affable:—would you believe it, Miss Mitchell, one of our poor men that was reaping in the fields last harvest, happened to cut his leg most sadly, and Madam Whitworth went to his poor hovel herself, and dressed the wound with her own hands; and even repeated the dressing every day till he was able to work again.—She also gave his wife and five small children, both cloaths and victuals, ay, and money too; God in heaven bless her for it, say I.—Ay, ay, Miss, (continued the honest dame) many in this country, who can much better afford it than Madam, does not do one quarter the good she does:—but we shall not long have her amongst us, I am afraid,—for I hear she is going to leave Berkshire very soon.

“THIS piece of information I received with sorrow; but willing to know as much as possible concerning this amiable lady, I enquired of dame Fairfield if she knew any particulars of her family? whereupon she proceeded in her rustic manner with a long account, of which, for the sake of brevity, I shall only relate some few particulars.

“THIS worthy woman was the widow of Colonel Whitworth, a gentleman possessed of no great income besides that produced by his commission.—She also, though born of a good family, and educated in a genteel manner, inherited but a small fortune, so that on the Colonel’s decease, his amiable widow, and one child, (a daughter) experienced that vicissitude in circumstances which many besides themselves have felt.

“BUT Mrs. Whitworth being blessed with fortitude and resignation, instantly suited her expences to her income, and retired to a small but neat house, at

——, in Berkshire, within a quarter of a mile of my retreat.

“A YOUNG gentleman, named Mortimer, whose father was a man of considerable fortune in the same county, happened to see Miss Whitworth, and soon became enamoured;—the young people so ordered it, that a private marriage ensued, without the knowledge of their parents on either side; but in a few months it was impossible to conceal their union, which so irritated the father of the young gentleman, that he immediately sent his son abroad.—This affecting circumstance so sensibly preyed on the gentle spirits of the unhappy wife, that she lived no longer than just to present her affectionate parent with an infant grand-daughter.

“THIS melancholy affair I found, by dame Fairfield’s account, happened about two years before.

“MRS. Whitworth, for a considerable time, experienced the greatest affliction, but, at length, Time’s lenient hand, aided by the soothing balm of blessed religion, enabled her to forget her woe; and regarding the lovely infant as a mitigation of her sufferings, transferred her maternal affection from the remains of her child, to the smiling image of its unfortunate mother.—As to Mrs. Whitworth’s intent of leaving Berkshire, my hostess informed me, that she heard that some friend had recommended a house in ——shire, which was much cheaper, and full as pleasant, though rather more retired.

“THIS information gained, an earnest desire soon filled my breast to be a constant associate and companion to this amiable lady; yet I knew not how to mention my wish, for fear of hurting that delicacy she appeared so eminently to possess.—But now did Fortune, for the first time, condescend to favour me, and at our fourth interview I ventured to hint my desire, and had the happiness to find Mrs. Whitworth agreed to my proposal with apparent pleasure; we then mutually consented to join our small fortunes, and retire to ——shire.—She made me acquainted with her whole story,

but, in such expressive descriptions, that my own sufferings seemed trivial, when compared with those this amiable woman had sustained.—I now could not avoid returning her obliging confidence; and, therefore, imparted the history of my life with the exactest candour; and the only reason I had to regret the recital was, that the worthy Mrs. Whitworth no sooner heard my birth and quality, than her politeness made her treat me so much as her superior, that it gave me real pain, which she no sooner observed, than she regarded me in a manner more to my liking;—she looked upon me as her friend and equal.

“ANOTHER reason, besides the felicity I promised to myself in the society of this amiable lady, was a full assurance that I should be secure from whatever designs Mr. Pellham might put in practice against me; for though Sally had assured me of her inviolable secrecy, I frequently trembled, lest threats and promises might, at length, force her to confess the place of my concealment.—Therefore, when the time for our leaving Berkshire arrived, I bid a friendly farewell to honest Dame Fairfield, who parted from me with much seeming affliction, which I really believed sincere: but description would fail, were I to attempt relating the numerous blessings expressed by the grateful peasants on their worthy benefactress;—each with honest tears bemoaned her leaving them; while lisping infants clasped their little hands and sobbed, at parting from their common parent.—Many, who were able, ran by the side of the carriage, and begged her blessing for at least a mile: a sight like this, where artless nature reigned without disguise, affected us considerably: we emptied our pockets among the little rustics, and the innocent Miss Mortimer begged her grandmother would let her do the same. This was complied with, while the starting tear of sensibility stood glistening in the eye of the amiable Mrs. Whitworth; and the chief discourse, till we reached our new residence, consisted in remarking the gratitude so visibly displayed from those guileless bosoms.

"WE had not been settled above a month in this calm retreat, when I began to experience more real happiness than I could have expected.—Mrs. Whitworth has an exceeding good harpsichord, of which she is a complete mistress; this charming amusement engrosses a great part of our time; and, as our mansion is but small, we keep only a healthy girl, about seventeen years of age, as a servant; who, with Mrs. Whitworth, her little grand-daughter, and myself, compose our whole family.

"SOON after I was situated in this new habitation, I wrote again to Madame de Beaumont, acquainting her of my second removal, but I have never received the least account, either from France or Spain; tho', about a year since, I ventured to write to my own indulgent parent. 'Therefore, at this time, I entirely despair of ever hearing from those unkind, yet beloved personages.

"IT now only remains (continued our fair heroine) to inform you, by what accident I came so late into the wood, where you, dear young lady, (addressing herself to me) so humanely extended your assistance in relieving an unhappy woman, who, as yet, I fear, is not secured from farther misery."

Here I assured her, that I should ever regard the having it in my power to assist so much merit, as one of the happiest circumstances of my life.—She returned my compliment with obliging affability, and then continued thus:

"THREE days before that fatal evening, I attended Mrs. Whitworth on a visit to the friend who had recommended the house.—As the distance is little more than eight miles, we went the first four on horseback, and were then met by Mrs. Benson (the lady before-mentioned) in her coach, attended by her nephew, a young collegian, then on a visit to his aunt from Cambridge.—The lady, as being a friend of my dear Mrs. Whitworth, I could not avoid regarding; especially as her appearance and deportment seemed to claim

it: though I did not entertain the same thoughts of her kinsman, as there seemed a levity in his manner whenever he addressed me, which was rather alarming; and I dreaded the thoughts of another Mr. Pellham.—I, however, kept my sentiments to myself, though determined to be on my guard against this second disturber of my peace.

“THE third day, it having been very warm, we agreed in the evening to take a walk in the wood before-mentioned.—Young Benson was not present when this proposal was made, as some business, a few miles distant, had obliged him to leave us.—We therefore pursued our intended promenade, which, as the evening was most delightful, tempted us to make much longer than at first we thought of.

“MRS. Whitworth and her friend had been expatiating on various subjects, both sublime and moral; among other topics, the passion of love had been treated of with much penetration and judgment.—This conversation, joined to the tranquil calmness which then reigned, awakened the unfortunate prepossession I once had felt, and even then could not obliterate for my beloved Beaumont.

“ABSORBED in reflection, I had struck into another path from that in which the friends were pursuing their way to Mrs. Benson’s; and, I believe, I should not soon have perceived my neglect, had I not been roused by the steps of some one approaching; who I soon discovered, by the light of the moon, to be the much dreaded collegian.—He appeared heated with wine, but started on seeing me alone, and then soon began to utter some incoherent expressions, which greatly alarmed me; from words he proceeded to unwarrantable liberties, and would have held me in his detested arms, had I not, by a sudden resistance, sprung from him, and ran I knew not whither, he following, till I reached the place where my strength failed me, and I was humanely rescued by my generous deliverers.”

HERE, my Emily, did the fair Spaniard conclude her affecting history, for which she received the united thanks of Mrs. Ramfay and your Sylvia.—I have mentioned before that we sent to Mrs. Whitworth, by Donna Clara's desire, as soon as she could possibly acquaint us with the residence of Mrs. Benson.—But how were we all agreeably amazed to see, in the first named lady, the very features of her I have described, as our hostess at the romantic cottage, where we also saw the lovely little Harriot.

MRS. Whitworth exhibited the greatest transport on seeing our charming Spaniard:—Mrs. Benson likewise soon paid us a visit, expressing the utmost abhorrence at her nephew's behaviour, whom she immediately forbade her house, and promised to make all the reparation in her power for his offence, by leaving the insulted Clara that portion she designed for him, which I believe is very considerable.

THUS you see, my Emily, virtue rewarded, and unprincipled vice receiving that neglect it deserves.—But the amiable d'Alcaarez would fain have waved this just decree in her favour, and endeavoured, as much as possible, to palliate the offence of young Benson: but his aunt remained immovable, and the very next day the alteration was made in her will.—She has also persuaded Mrs. Whitworth and our fair guest to leave their humble dwelling, and, with little Harriot, to reside entirely with her.—This is already agreed upon, so that we esteem ourselves happy in having, on the other side the copse, such amiable acquaintances; between whom and ourselves an intimate friendship seems already cemented.

I HAVE been favoured with a sight of the formidable Beaumont's picture, and really, Emily, (unless his limner flattered greatly) he totally eclipses all our boastful British champions;—nay, there is hardly a Harry or a Frederic can come in competition with him; but comparisons, they say, are odious, so I shall forbear, notwithstanding I am at too great a distance to fear any violent display of your ladyship's wrathful resentment.

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WRITE soon,—remember it is your turn now, therefore begin, child, as soon as possible, nor dare to leave off till forbid by
SYLVIA BEVERLY.

LETTER XXI.

Miss MUSGRAVE to Miss BEVERLY.

AFTER first desiring the contents of this letter may remain an inviolable secret, I must acknowledge the justice of your commands, Sylvia; and I am infinitely happy to have it now in my power to satisfy your reasonable request.

BUT, first, receive a thousand thanks for fair Clara's history, though an adventure of my own will not permit me time sufficient to animadvert thereon at present; but you may expect my remarks in some future epistle, when my mind is less engaged than at present.

YET family affairs oblige me to inform you, that our intended tour to Bath is postponed, on what account I cannot declare positively, but I believe Lady Susan at length dreads visiting that gay receptacle; therefore I must be obliged to console myself without even a chance of seeing my Swain, who, by his last letters, acquaints me that he shall soon leave that place, (where he has been with the Duke of **** for near three weeks) to proceed with his noble uncle to the south of France, the physicians recommending the air of that kingdom as the last resource for the reparation of an injured constitution.

I HAVE been this fortnight past on a visit to Miss Constantia Macclesfield, the only child of the Colonel, who you must remember when in town. I believe that I mentioned this Madam Gravity to you then, whose studious inclination prevents her from frequently engaging in the gay amusement so much practised at St. James's: in short, Sylvia, she is almost a Plato in petticoats,—a meer piece of still life, in comparison of such fashionable females as my honoured mother and sister: yet, to do her justice, there is something in her manner, even to such a giddy brain as myself, that appears

extremely agreeable; and notwithstanding the difference of our tempers, we are mightily pleased with each other's acquaintance: my vivacity is kept under proper restrictions by her solidity, and her gravity is hindered from sinking into downright gloominess, by a display of my volatile powers, so that a proper equilibrium is sustained.

THE seat of Colonel Macclesfield is near ten miles from Richly Park, and known by the name of Sedgeley Abbey; its situation is delightful beyond imagination; the gardens spacious, and though not exactly correspondent to the present taste, display luxuriant Nature improved by the nicest Art: this agreeable seat stands within a quarter of a mile of the sea, which affords a most charming prospect from a building in the form of a gothic temple on the summit of a long terrace walk, and which is the constant residence of Constantia, whenever she is disposed for contemplation.

As she is the Colonel's only child, and her father's estate considerable, she has received many offers in respect to marriage, all of which have hitherto been declined; and, if I am to believe her constant declaration, she will continue in the same disposition.—The Colonel, indeed, has often wished she was not quite so averse to that honourable state, as the old gentleman wants much to be a grandsire; but however he is too fond a parent to press her on a subject that appears disagreeable, and as she has now attained her twenty-seventh year, I apprehend she will continue in her fixed resolution to live and die a virgin.

MEN are composed of materials too gross and turbulent for this placid nymph, whose affections are not to be won by rude unpolished mortals: no, no, my friend! this fair platonic will not permit other intercourse than that of some airy Sylph, whose delicate texture and fine sensibility are correspondent to the element they inhabit.

WHAT say you, Sylvia, to those refined conceptions?—for my part, as I aspire to no more elevation of sentiment than a meer mortal, I expect only the addresses of one in mine own sphere; and I freely confess

those exalted ideas are rather too sublime for Emily;—give me honest Harry Pembroke, though composed of the rude materials of mortality, and let Constantia unenvied regard an aerial lover, decorated with glittering pinions, and all other resplendent endowments that fancy can suggest.

AND now for an adventure, my friend, in the stile of delicate romance.—Indeed, Sylvia, you will hardly credit my tale; you will rather imagine my intimacy with this refined nymph has occasioned me to represent beautiful fiction, than artless reality; yet be assured the whole is justly correspondent with strictest truth.

SOON after my residence at Sedgeley Abbey, Constantia prevailed on me to take a morning's walk, which, by her desire, was before Aurora had well unbarred the eastern gates of heaven, that (as she expressed it) I might once in my life behold the dazzling splendor of the rising sun. Willing to oblige this fair enthusiast, I consented; and I must acknowledge, that I was abundantly repaid for leaving my pillow so much earlier than usual.

CONSTANTIA led me to a delightful prospect of the sea, from which the resplendent God of Day appeared ascending; and indeed, never did any sight so infinitely inspire me:—even at this moment do I wish for the expressive eloquence of a Milton to describe the glorious scene.—Faint and languid must be all attempts in me to delineate the prospect—the like of which, if you have ever really beheld, every description of mine would appear crude or insipid; I shall therefore only say, that the delightful object occasioned the whole face of Nature to rejoice,—every hill and valley smiled,—the flocks and herds, with grateful bleatings and expressive lowings, hail'd the God of Day;—the feathered warblers chirped in concert,—and (to use the language of the inspired Gesner) “soon began to pour the musick of their little throats to Him, who gave them voice and melody.”

SUCH united gratulations from those we esteem senseless animals, conspired to fill me with reverential awe;—

and now a large field, wherein to expatiate, opened to Constantia, who began, with all the fervor of a Rowe, to examine the several beauties that surrounded us; and here it was that she shone, for her remarks were judiciously devout, yet, at the same time, free from those slavish fetters with which Superstition would encumber the mind.

THUS tranquil and serene we proceeded, still keeping the sea in view, upon our right hand,—when, on a sudden, we were surprized with pleasurable amazement, at the sound of soft harmony, resembling a flagelet, on the left.

My grave friend now looked with fixed attention, as if she imagined it the musick of the spheres.—We however stopped, the better to attend from whence it proceeded, nothing appearing but the sea on one hand, and on the other a long range of chalky cliffs, on whose rocky summits no building whatever was seen;—the nearer we proceeded towards the sound, the more it seemed to issue from one of the cliffs on a level with the ground on which we walked.—The musick now ceased, and we plainly heard a manly voice express the following short but pathetic hymn of adoration.

- “ Hail, dread Supreme! Almighty Power divine!
- “ In whom Grace, Mercy, Love, and Truth combine;
- “ Hail, bright refulgent orb! whose bounteous rays
- “ Enliven all, and speak thy Maker’s praise;
- “ Taught by thy constant progress, let me prove
- “ My firm obedience to the powers above;
- “ Let no vain murmurings possess my breast,
- “ But in submission let my soul find rest,
- “ Till the wish’d mandate from above be given,
- “ To loose from earth what stops my flight to heaven.”

WHEN this was ended, I proposed to Constantia that we should return, being unwilling to intrude on the wished-for solitude of one so truly devout;—but this adventure partly suiting her refined system, she begged me to stay, saying, “ Oh, Miss Musgrave, why will you

neglect an opportunity thus favourable to behold so excellent a person as this must be." To this I would have made some objection, but she appeared so desirous of staying, that I at length consented; and advancing a little farther, discovered an old man dressed in a plain, decent garb; his countenance, which exhibited pure health, was at once striking and agreeable;—a sort of divine fervor beamed from his eyes, and a beard of a moderate length, white as the mountain snow, contributed to render his person truly venerable. He was seated at the front of his rocky cell, seemingly fixed in contemplation, so that for a few minutes we had leisure to observe him without disturbing his reverie;—at length he perceived us, and arose with some marks of surprise, but soon recovered his tranquility on hearing Constantia say, "Pardon us, venerable father, for this intrusion, but my friend and I happening to walk this way, to enjoy the sweet serenity of the morning, we have been so fortunate as to hear your delightful melody, and devout ejaculation; and I believe we shall ever esteem it the happiest moment of our lives, since it has convinced us that there is such a thing as real sublimity yet subsisting in this degenerate age."—Here she stopped, when our Anchoret, with a benign aspect, replied,—“Your deportments seeming to correspond with your words, receive my welcome.—Enter my homely habitation, if it be agreeable to you,—where you may repose yourselves before you return.”

WE accepted the friendly invitation, and on our entrance placed ourselves on a part of the rock that projected, as if design'd by Nature for a seat; for in this abode no appearance of human labour was visible, but all was the artless productions of her unerring hand, aided by that Power, whose single FIAT brought those stupendous structures into being!

You see, Sylvia, how greatly I am improved since this sublime visit; but here let me confess, that I never before that morning esteemed myself totally ignorant; and really then, my friend, while listening to the refined

sentiments of this venerable sage, and Constantia, could not help regarding myself as a poor, despicable mortal!—Nay, hardly could I aspire to that title; for I actually imagined that I only resembled one of those fluttering insects, whose sole delight consists in basking in a sun-beam, to display the lustre of their painted wings; unmindful that the most trivial accident may destroy not only their beauty but their life.

CONSTANTIA, charmed with his discourse, begged permission to visit him again; to which the hermit answered:

“IT is twice ten years since first I made this rock my only home; during which time my solitude has been a secret from the whole world but—*One*;—here have I passed the rigour of twenty winters, and felt the raging heat of as many different seasons;—yet unmindful either of December’s snow or August’s sultry sun, I have lived content,—enjoying calm felicity, by being secluded from the perfidious race of Adam! and partaking of few more advantages in respect of subsistence, than the animals who brouze the mountain herbage.

“THUS retired and unknown for so long a time, I fondly hoped I might have remained in the same state, till this friendly rock, now my dwelling, might have proved my sepulchre.—But as the Almighty has pleased it should be otherwise, I am happy in that my retirement has been found by such fair inquisitives, in whom I behold appearances of that innocence I would fain persuade myself is real.—I therefore accept your desire.—Come then, my children, (continued the good old man, with tears stealing down his venerable cheeks) come to my solitude as often as you please, provided it be not later in the day than this hour, lest I should be farther known; and let me also beg that you would keep my hermitage a secret.—On these conditions visit, when agreeable, *Him* whose example may warn you how to guard against deceit in the tumultuous world we live in, and from whose instruction I hope you may gain some knowledge.”

THEN leading us to the entrance of his cell, he said, “Farewel, my children—the day advances—may hea-

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ven preserve you till you again see *Him*, who has bid a last adieu to the whole race of mortals except yourselves, and one friend—alas! the only one I have.”

WITH this pathetic remonstrance and permission we took our leaves, Constantia the whole way home discoursing on no other topic than the venerable sage.—She, soon after we arrived, retired to her beloved temple, while I instantly determined to give you, my Sylvia, an account of this extraordinary adventure; but I was at that time with-held, by reflecting on the promise we had given our Anchoret, not to divulge the secret of his retirement;—however, at breakfast I informed Constantia of the desire I had to send you word of it; which she (ever tenacious of her steady adherence to truth) objected to, till such time as I might receive permission from the Sage himself.

THIS with much entreaty she at length promised to attempt to gain; and at our third visit my wish was accomplished, though on no other terms than your observing that secrecy to which we were before enjoined.

THEREFORE remember, Sylvia, and strictly conform to what I prescribed at the beginning of my letter, or you must not expect to be favoured with the history of our Hermit's life and adventures before he entered this voluntary seclusion; the which we have received his promise of hearing at our next interview.

LET me have your answer soon, that I may know the strength of your obedience, before you receive further intelligence from

EMILY MUSGRAVE.

LETTER XXII.

Miss BEVERLY to Miss MUSGRAVE.

REALLY, Emily, you have acquitted yourself so incomparably, that were I not sensible that you possess a small share of a foible so natural to our sex, I should be tempted to bestow infinite acknowledgments, praises, and so forth.—But I dare not, for fear of encreasing that said passion; a small particle of which may

do well enough, but an addition would be absolutely unbearable.

YOUR Ladyship may strictly rely on my secrecy, I assure you, for I would fain know the history of this same Anchorer;—yet I cannot, for my life, believe that his sufferings have been so very severe, as to occasion the rigid rules he has so long prescribed himself.

MEN, as you observe, are strange turbulent creatures, incapable of bearing the least controul:—Indeed, Emily, I often think they extend their expectations to much greater limits than was originally intended;—impatient to an excess in having their utmost wishes gratified; which, if they fail, they are apt to inveigh bitterly, not only against the person perhaps, who occasions their disappointment, but, with a true cynical disposition, to snarl at the whole, and turn misanthropists—which I verily believe to be the case with your venerable sage;—yet, by the reception you and your grave friend met with, I am inclined to think a few more visits will soften the rigour of his resentment to the world; and we shall see you and your Constantia introduce, after twenty years voluntary retirement,—the Hermit to mankind.

MANY fine things have been written on the power of beauty,—some of which are true, no doubt:—Your adventure then, if it succeeds as I expect, will furnish farther accounts of its infallibility.

FOR heaven's sake! Emily! do not let Miss Macclesfield see this letter,—she will imagine I am the most improper person in the world to be intrusted with so important a secret.—Well, I will now endeavour to be more serious.

FREDERIC has again dared to mention his passion—is not this sufficient to occasion sober reflections. Alas! what an embarrassing situation is mine?—Mrs. Ramsay, I believe, apprehends something, though her prudence hinders her from expressing it.

THE youth, I verily think, has made Donna Clara his confidant, for every time I see her she is continually

bestowing such elaborate praises on him, as from any other person, perhaps, might not be so agreeable; but her tender thoughts remain still fixed on the beloved Chevalier; for when she would commend Frederic, she frequently says, with a heart-felt sigh—"Such was my once adored Beaumont!"

I SUPPOSE you will now enquire how I deigned to receive this second avowal?—Why, not quite with that haughty air before described;—yet—I desired him, if he valued my friendship, to forbear the mention of a circumstance which I must reject.

THIS placid answer did not seem to plunge my Damon into absolute despair; on the contrary, he flatters himself, I imagine, with the soothing sentiment in the old song, that "Friendship with Sylvia is sister to Love;"—nearly allied, I confess, Emily,—but of this he must not be certain.

I YESTERDAY received a letter from my aunt Cowley, who informs me, that she is preparing to attend her affectionate help-mate to Scarborough.—He has been indisposed for some time with various disorders, which the physicians have at length pronounced an inveterate scurvy.—Poor Amanda, notwithstanding the treatment she has received, expresses much affliction at his sufferings;—she is, undoubtedly, my Emily, a perfect pattern of patient tenderness—and seems desirous of acquiring the fortitude of an Angel, by persevering in her duty, and, of proving her fidelity to a brutal husband.

YET, notwithstanding her example has unquestionable merit, I believe it will ever be more admired than imitated: the conduct of wives in general demonstrates the truth of my remark, and I, at this instant, believe that Amanda stands alone for conjugal obedience, at least in so distressing a situation.

I FORGOT to tell you, Emily, that my beloved Mrs. Ramsay has been indisposed for a few days with a cold, though, thank heaven, with no symptoms to alarm us:—This you may readily imagine, otherwise it would have been my first intelligence.

WE are, this afternoon, to be favoured with a visit from our amiable friends on the other side the copse;—Donna Clara has, as yet, received no accounts either from France or Spain, which, notwithstanding her present agreeable situation, appears to give her much anxiety;—we endeavour by every means in our power, to dispel her melancholy, for which purpose we are, this evening, to have a little kind of rural festivity, which is to conclude with—a ball.—Now none of your sarcastic smiles, Emily, at the polite epithet, since we shall certainly be as happy, nay, perhaps experience more real delight, than the glittering multitudes at Almack's or Soho.

I BELIEVE I must now conclude;—nay, in short, I may be positive,—as I have really nothing more to offer,—no new adventures to keep me scribbling for hours!—which task must now be yours, my friend; remember, my curiosity waits, therefore proceed with your Hermit as soon as possible, to satisfy the impatience of your

SYLVIA BEVERLY.

LETTER XXIII.

Miss MUSGRAVE to Miss BEVERLY.

Richly Park.

ALAS! Sylvia! what mutable beings inhabit this transitory sphere!—You see, by the date of this letter, I have left Sedgely Abbey, and without the satisfaction of knowing the Hermit's history;—affairs of greater moment in this place claim, at present, my whole attention.—Who would imagine the change a few months have made in the pleasing prospect of happiness, which my dear, deluded father had promised himself?—

ALAS! my amiable girl! the innocence and rectitude of your mind, hindered you from crediting the tale of honest Lydia Trueman; but, from what has happened, there remains not the least doubt of her veracity.

LADY Susan is, indeed, Sylvia, the abandoned wanton!—she has actually eloped with her former para-

mour—Morton!—as has been discovered by a letter from him, which her Ladyship carelessly left in an open drawer.

PAPA behaves (even yet, at times) with all the frenzy of distraction—the Countess of L—— appears stupified with grief and shame; in short, the whole house seems one continued scene of horror and confusion.—To add to our affliction, Charlotte has accompanied her perfidious Ladyship,—so that the situation of your Emily is not to be described.

It is now six days since I left Sedgeley Abbey;—poor Trueman was the messenger of this dreadful news;—the honest old man, on his arrival, begged permission to see me alone. I was at the time with Miss Macclesfield in her beloved temple, when the servant entered and informed me of the steward's desire.

My heart shrunk at the message, and when I saw him with the tear stealing down his furrowed cheek, I dreaded to enquire the cause; but he soon broke silence, by saying, “Dear Miss Emily, let me beg you would hasten back to Richly Park.”—I then stammered out—“For heaven's sake, Trueman, what is the matter?—I hope no accident to my dear Papa—is he well? answer me quick I beg!”—He then related what had happened, and concluded, by assuring me, that the regard he entertained for his master, had induced him to fetch me, to administer what consolation was in my power to my suffering parent;—for that the confusion was so great, I was not so much as thought of.—I returned him thanks for his duteous sensibility, and bidding Constantia farewell, after just hinting at the disagreeable reason of my departure, accompanied Trueman in the chariot he came in to Richly Park, and no sooner alighted than I flew to Papa's closet, where I heard he was alone.

On opening the door—Oh! Sylvia! what were my emotions when I saw him with his sword drawn, and horrid desperation in his countenance!—I threw myself on my knees, caught hold of the murderous weapon, exclaiming—“my dear, my honoured father!”—I could

no more, for a few moments,—my heart seemed bursting from my tortured bosom;—but heaven endued me with fortitude sufficient to support the conflict.—A gush of plenteous tears now came to my relief;—I removed the fatal sword from my beloved father's hand, — while he stood as if petrified with his own reflections;—his eyes were firmly rivetted on me, though, I believe, for a few moments, I was foreign from his thoughts; — at length, with a deep-fetched sigh, and a look soon changed from horror to infinite tenderness, he said,—“My Emily!”—then presented his hand in order to raise me, which I took and pressed to my lips with such fervour, that, in an instant, he caught the tender infection of sensibility; and, snatching me to his bosom, tears flowing as he spoke, he said, “My child! my dearest Emily! what preventing angel hath sent thee here, to hinder my committing the unpardonable crime of suicide!”—Then raising his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, “Oh! gracious God! forgive the intended rashness of thy servant!”—Turning again to me, he continued his supplication, by saying, “and may thy boundless mercies be showered on my child, who, by thine infinite compassion has been ordained the instrument of my preservation!”

HE now seemed more composed, and seating me by him, said, “My dear Emily, the ungrateful Lady Susan has left me!—eloped from her indulgent husband, to the guilty embraces of an infamous adulterer!—Thy sister too, ungracious girl! has attended her abandoned mother!—Have I not, therefore, reason for my madness—madness most exquisite!”—Here I was fearful the storm of resentful sorrow would overpower him,—I therefore endeavoured the utmost in my feeble power to enforce such arguments as I judged most conducive to calm his thoughts, and, undoubtedly, some superior being assisted the pious purpose; for you are certain, Sylvia, my abilities never reached so high as administering consolation in the most trivial afflictions:—How then, unless aided by some eloquent and pitying angel,

could I have spoke comfort to one under such accumulated sufferings?—

THE arguments I used wrought, in great measure, the wished-for effect, and, after two hours conference with my dear father, we left the closet, and I had the supreme satisfaction of receiving his faithful promise to attempt the horrid purpose no more, which my presence had happily prevented.—This I had no reason to doubt, as his acknowledgments to the Divine Being were so expressive, that his whole soul seemed rapt in fervent praise and adoration.

My next visit was to the Countess, whom I found seated in a fixed melancholy: she, however, rose on my entering the dressing-room, and pressing my hand, was unable, for a few moments, to utter the least syllable;—I seated myself near her, and broke the affecting silence by saying, “My dearest Madam, if it be possible for me to mitigate in the least, the remembrance of an unhappy circumstance, let me beg you would receive my utmost efforts for the purpose.”—I would have proceeded, but her Ladyship interrupted me by exclaiming—“Oh! Miss Emily! is it possible you can endeavour to relieve the sufferings of her who is the wretched parent of an abandoned wanton; who, deaf to the suggestions of honour, virtue, and every social perfection, has rendered your worthy father miserable! Alas! you cannot!—justice, and the duty of a child forbids;—the sufferings of Sir Robert will justify reproof, should you upbraid me with being the mother of his adulterous wife!—and impute even her worst crime to my account.—All this I could readily admit as just,—then do not, by your amiable intent, silence the cries of laudable resentment; nor, by a mistaken generosity, endeavour to administer that consolation I am unworthy to receive.”

THIS self-accusation I was incapable of listening to any longer; I therefore told her Ladyship that I must take the liberty of dissenting from her ideas of justice;—that her notions respecting the crime of Lady Susan

were carried (in regard to herself) to too great a length, as, in my opinion, none but the most malevolent could think of upbraiding an innocent person with the fault of the guilty, how close soever they may be allied by the ties of blood or affinity, as even her Ladyship's near relation to Lady Susan must subject her to feel the utmost anxiety, without receiving any of those cruel additional sarcasms she had just mentioned.

THIS, and much more to the same effect, at length seemed to afford the Countess much consolation;—and let me acknowledge, Sylvia, though this was the first time, in my volatile state of existence, that I ever attempted to deliver sentiments so grave, so fraught, with endeavours to comfort the oppressed; I succeeded so far beyond even my hopes, that I experienced that heart-felt satisfaction, which ever will attend such laudable intentions.—Indeed, my sweet friend, the success I met with in this new character, has almost made me resolve to despise the false glare of that jocund pleasantry which I before encouraged,—to turn female Philanthropos, and devote my every power to administer consolation to the afflicted.

WERE Constantia with me, how would she applaud this excellent intent, and recommend constant practice for attaining the beneficent purpose.—If this will really accomplish my future character, I apprehend my present situation will supply ample means for perseverance, as both Papa and the amiable Countess seem to demand my most assiduous care, to prevent their sinking into that abyss of melancholy, from which my presence happily relieved them.

OH! Vice! thou destructive tyrant! not even the glittering pleasures, with which thou at first fascinates thy deluded votaries, can hinder thee from being regarded by the friends of virtue, as a monster horrid and detestable:—Nay, even to thy followers, the promised fields of happiness, and every gratification that for a moment intoxicates, vanishes on the first approach of sacred Truth! who, in an instant, changes the daz-

zling prospect into a gloomy desert, divests thee of thy bewitching garb, and leaves thee exposed in thine own detested form, loathsome and horrible!—Then too late they find, the portion that thou leavest consists only in thy execrable companions—Remorse and fell Despair! these continue constant attendants both sleeping and awake, scourging with scorpion whips each recollective faculty!

SUCH a situation, to those aliens from virtue, must be regarded as just:—But how is thy tyranny to be abhorred and feared, when, by thy means, the innocent are involved in deep affliction, by the fatal transgressions of the guilty!—Had Vice not reigned, and the deluded Lady Susan not listened to its destructive counsel, my dear father and the worthy Countess had not experienced those arrows of affliction with which their bosoms are at present wounded.

I KNOW my Sylvia will readily admit these sentiments, though uttered by one whose sprightly disposition will hardly be deemed capable of thinking on such grave harangues; yet I assure you, my friend, the present unhappiness that reigns at Richly Park, has considerably abridged the former vivacity of her, who, notwithstanding, either grave or gay, will ever remain unalterably yours,

EMILY MUSGRAVE.

LETTER XXIV.

Miss BEVERLY to Mrs. MUSGRAVE.

BELIEVE me, Emily, when I assure you how sincerely I participate in your present distress; the sufferings of Sir Robert and the amiable Countess, sensibly affect your Sylvia.

OUR dear Mrs. Ramsay is at present much indisposed, so that your letter, fraught with such moral sentiments, was more welcome at this time than would have been the utmost display of those volatile powers I know you possess.



YES, Emily, there is (as the wisest of monarchs informs us) "a time for all things;"—a time when even youth itself, flush'd with the enjoyments of health and affluence, should forget the circling round of pleasure and delight, to reflect on the transitory possession of temporal gratifications;—meditate on the several distinctions of Vice and Virtue, and by holding the balance with an equal hand, be able to give the preference as our inward monitor shall direct.

YOUR admirable delineation of what succeeds a vicious course, had such an effect, that even my sleeping imaginations were engaged, and continued the waking reverie.—I will not pretend to promise you equal satisfaction to what reading the delightful Visions of *Mirza* might afford, yet as there appeared a more regular chain of events than we commonly experience in a dream, I will venture to relate the whole as it occurred.

METHOUGHT I was attended by an aerial Genius to a vast plain, divided into two distinct roads, each of which terminated by a temple of a lofty structure;—the path on the right hand appeared regular, except here and there small risings, in a direction almost perpendicular, on the top of which was erected an arch, bearing on an entablature an inscription, which, at the distance I was placed, could not then be read:—that on the left was equally wide, appeared less regular than the other, had none of those ascents, but an equal number of arches, with inscriptions likewise, unintelligible on account of the distance.

I WAS about to enquire of my aerial guide the meaning of what I beheld, when with a celestial smile he bade me observe and learn.

THESE words were no sooner uttered, than I saw an innumerable company of both sexes, and different ages, advancing to enter the roads.—The spirit that attended me waved a silver wand, and I instantly observed a number of winged boys, amazing beautiful, fluttering round us, and seeming intent, by frequently pointing to the temple at the end, to divert the footsteps of the

multitude towards the right-hand road. Some few attended to these blooming advisers, but the greater part listened to the suggestions of three females of exquisite charms, who appeared at the entrance on the left;—their garments were rich and splendid, and on their countenance seemed to set an everlasting bloom of youth; they carried small slips of gilded vellum on their hands, which they shewed to the multitude to attract their regard;—I could plainly discover that on the first was written **CONSTANT FESTIVITY**; on the second, **CONTINUAL DELIGHT**;—and on the third **NEVER-ENDING PLEASURE**.

As the travellers continued their course, I was conveyed by my friendly guide in such a manner that we seemed to traverse the air just over their heads, whereby I could discern their every motion.

WE were now so near the first arch, that I could plainly read the inscriptions; that on the left was **INDOLENT EASE**,—through which the multitude passed with every apparent symptom of careless mirth;—the other on the right was **LAUDABLE INDUSTRY**, which the few travelling that road had some difficulty of attaining, by reason of the steep ascent at the entrance; but who, on their raising their eyes to the little blooming sylphs, received immediate assistance by their extending wands of ivory, on which were inscribed in silver letters, **THE AIDS OF VIRTUE**;—these they no sooner touched, than they gained the summit, and passed the arch with a calm but grateful satisfaction.

THE distance of one road from the other was, at the beginning, but a small space, so that those on the right received many opprobrious taunts from the others, for taking so much unnecessary pains in passing the arch, when they had gone through theirs with infinite ease and pleasure.—I also observed, that there were cross paths, which led from one road to the other; tolerably easy at the beginning, but so rugged when farther advanced, especially from the left to the right, that some who would fain have entered were dismayed; however,

I beheld a few who had proceeded far in the left hand road, and who, being encouraged by the little celestials, had fortitude enough to persevere, notwithstanding the insinuations of the three females, who endeavoured by every insidious art to restrain them, upbraiding them at the same time with leaving the promised happinesses expressed on their scrolls.

I ALSO observed with infinite surprize, some who had entered and attained many ascents on the right, turn aside and mix with the gay unthinking multitude on the left.

WHEN they had passed all the arches, I beheld, as they drew near the temple, the cross paths ceased, so that it was impossible for either part to join the other.

I CANNOT remember every of the inscriptions; some few, however, I am able to recollect; as LUXURY, SENSUALITY, VOLUPTUOUSNESS, LIBIDINOUS DELIGHTS, and WORLDLY GRATIFICATIONS on the left; GENEROSITY, PRUDENCE, TEMPERANCE, CHASTITY, and CALM TRANQUILITY on the right.

THE arches passed, the remainder of those who had entered the roads prepared to enter the temples.—Indeed few who had engaged on the right were missing, but a prodigious number had failed on the left; some reached no farther than the arch of LUXURY, and then dropped into a gloomy cave, many of which were placed on one side of the arches; some attained VOLUPTUOUSNESS, and then disappeared;—many fell at LIBIDINOUS DELIGHTS, and, in short, so few passed the last arch, that tho' at the beginning their numbers far surpassed those on the right, yet on entering the temples, the latter had rather the advantage.

WHEN we drew near to the portal of that on the right, the travellers were received by a benevolent spirit, who hailing them in a melodious voice, bade them enter, and receive from VIRTUE herself the reward of their toils.

MY friendly guide attended me into the presence of the goddess, who was seated on a throne of ivory, en-

riched with diamonds; her garments were at once modest and elegant, and so divine an emanation beamed from her eyes, as inspired all around her with celestial sensations;—with a placid and heavenly smile she welcomed them to her temple, where Perfect Felicity waited to crown their warfare. I was extremely unwilling to leave this delightful place, especially as, methought, the Goddesses deigned to smile on me also, who had not experienced such numerous difficulties; but my aerial guide compelled me to be a witness of the reception of the other travellers.

ACCORDINGLY he transported me to the left-hand temple, where a ghastly phantom waited to receive the deluded company, with a countenance betokening revenge and fury. I shrunk back at his appearance, as did also those who waited for admittance; but a secret power urged them to advance, and fulfil the words of this gloomy porter, who with a voice dismal and hollow as the depths of Erebus, said, “Enter, and receive from VICE the utmost of your deserts.”

WE soon had a distinct view of the malignant power, whom radiant Truth had divested of her fallacious garment, that we might behold her as she really is,—deformed and horrible!

HER votaries started with inconceivable dismay at her appearance, always imagining her more beautiful than those three females who had first ensnared them to the left-hand road.—Those also now advanced, arrayed as at first; but no sooner had Truth darted one look, than they appeared (except Vice herself) the most execrable phantoms that can be imagined; they still held the vellum scroll in their hands, but instead of the before-mentioned words of **CONSTANT FESTIVITY, CONTINUAL DELIGHTS, and NEVER-ENDING PLEASURE**, written in letters of gold; there now appeared in bloody characters, **ETERNAL REMORSE, EVERLASTING DESPAIR, and NEVER-ENDING DEATH**.

THE gloomy empress of this dire abode now waved an ebon wand, and instantly a cave fraught with every

woe, opened at the pitchy throne ; into which, amidst the shrieks and groans of ten thousand deluded wretches, long inhabitants of the dismal void, the affrighted travellers were hurled.

THE terrible outcry roused me from this affecting vision, and I awaked in the greatest perturbation imaginable.—Thus you see, Emily, what an amazing effect your remarks have occasioned in your friend.—Adieu, my dear girl, I have as it were just snatched time to send you the foregoing, as I almost regret every moment that is not spent in the chamber of dear Mrs. Ramsay, of whom I hope I shall shortly be able to send a better account.—She is indeed, Emily, very indifferent ; so that, except yourself, I know not one person in the world who should engross the least portion of the present hours so much valued by SYLVIA BEVERLY.

LETTER XXV.

MISS MUSGRAVE TO MISS BEVERLY.

THANK heaven, Sylvia, part of our affliction is lessened by the return of Charlotte, who, like a female prodigal, appears with the deepest contrition for her late breach of duty.

PAPA has received her with such paternal forgiveness, that unless her heart be more susceptible of bad impressions than I sincerely hope it is, I believe I may venture to declare that she will never be guilty of a deviation from dutious affection.

How does my Sylvia imagine this change in Charlotte's sentiments was wrought ? not by the interposition of those blooming sylphs alone, whom you so charmingly describe in your pathetic dream ;—no, indeed, my friend ! how far their beneficent influence might corroborate the attempts of a mortal, I know not, but we are actually beholden to honest Harry Pembroke for her first return to duty.

THIS assertion will no doubt surprise you, till I shall clear up the seeming mystery.—Thus then it was :

THE fugitives, attended by the vile Morton, had determined the gay kingdom of France should be their first tour; accordingly, after staying two days in London, they set out for Dover, but the wind being very high on their arrival at that port, and continuing so for some days, they were fearful of venturing to Calais.

THIS obliged them to remain secret during their stay in England, for fear of any pursuit my dear father might make after them; though this they needed not to have apprehended, as his distraction rendered him incapable of such measures; but behold! they met with a discovery where they least imagined it.—You may remember that I informed you that Harry accompanied his uncle to the south of France about a month since, for the recovery of his health; from which place the Duke has received so much benefit, that his nephew obtained permission to make a trip to England, under pretence of business; but (if I may believe him) a desire of seeing my ladyship was the most prevailing spur toward visiting his native kingdom; and imagining the surprize would be agreeable, forbore any mention to me of his design.

HE landed at Dover on the very day the guilty pair and my sister intended to embark for Calais. Soon after his arrival, he chanced to see Charlotte at a window, ready equipped for the voyage.

THE house being a public one, for the resort of all persons, he entered without any ceremony, impatient to enquire if I was with her. On being shewed the apartment, in which also was Lady Susan and Morton, he observed a visible embarrassment both in her Ladyship and my sister, the former rushing out of the room with such rude precipitancy as greatly amazed him. Morton also soon disappeared, and Charlotte would have followed, but Mr. Pembroke caught hold of her gown, saying at the same time, “for heaven’s sake, Miss Musgrave, what is the reason of this behaviour.”

CHARLOTTE desired him, with marks of evident confusion, to let her follow Lady Susan; adding, that business of consequence obliged her to be in haste.

HARRY has since declared, that at that moment he apprehended something of the truth, to which the sight of Morton greatly contributed; whose face he well remembered, having once witnessed to his being turned out of one of the public rooms at Tunbridge, for illicit practices at the card table.—He therefore resolutely determined to know the truth from Charlotte, before he would permit her to leave him;—to which intent he said, “Let my regard for your family, Miss Musgrave, excuse my seeming rudeness, but before I proceed, answer me, I beg, how you and Lady Susan fell into company with so despicable a wretch as Him who just left the room?”

CHARLOTTE would have bustled away with a few reproachful airs, but Harry remained inflexible; and then demanded if Papa knew of their being at Dover? to this she made some evasive answer; till at length, overcome by his steady resolution of knowing the whole, she confessed that her Ladyship had taken the tour unknown to any one, and that they had intended going to Calais that evening.

ON hearing this Mr. Pembroke rang the bell, and enquired if the lady and gentleman who left that room about half an hour before were yet in the house, being determined, if possible, to part her Ladyship from her scandalous paramour; but he was answered by the waiter, that they had taken a post-chaise and four the instant they left the room, in which was placed their several boxes, &c. and had ordered the boys to drive towards London.

ON hearing this account, Charlotte’s courage entirely forsook her; she burst into tears, exclaiming, “Perfidious Lady Susan, is it thus you repay my attachment to your foibles?—Oh Mr. Pembroke, how shall I ever be able to meet the just resentment of an injured parent.”

HARRY endeavoured to compose her, and proposed instantly setting out in pursuit of them, though he hinted that he was fearful the intent would prove fruitless,

as they no doubt proceeded on a different road from what they had declared; but that he would, with her approbation, immediately order a chaise, and set off for London.

CHARLOTTE, with all the bitterness of reflection, acquiesced with this proposal, on which the chaise was got ready. But as they were leaving the room, the master of the house produced a bill for their expences during their stay at Dover, adding, that both the lady and gentleman had told him she would discharge the whole, as they could not possibly stay till it was made out.

POOR Charlotte's dilemma was now too great to be described; on inspection she found the bill amounted to near fifteen pounds, which sum was infinitely more than she could pay; and she had also the mortification to find, that in her Ladyship's hurry she had taken every thing that belonged to her with the rest of the baggage, being all packed up together ready for their embarkation.

SHE, however, was not reduced to the disagreeable necessity of soliciting Mr. Pembroke to discharge this account.—The generous Harry hearing the demand, and being a witness to her dilemma, instantly paid the whole without the least enquiry. When Charlotte, unable to express her acknowledgments, seated herself in the chaise; my gallant swain placed himself by her, and ordered the drivers to proceed, with as much expedition as possible, to Canterbury. He made frequent enquiries after the indiscreet Lady Susan, and her dissolute companion, but received not the least information through the whole journey; they reached London early in the evening, when Mr. Pembroke, after seeing her safe in ——— Square, took his leave, promising to call next morning, and, if agreeable, to attend her to Richly Park.

HE then left Charlotte to her own reflections, which were not very entertaining, you may believe, Sylvia.—My swain was as good as his word, and yesterday morning about eleven o'clock, as I was sitting in my dressing-room (which overlooks the court) reading for almost the

fiftieth time your amusing letter, on a sudden I was roused from my agreeable employment by the sound of a carriage driving smartly towards the house.

I soon knew the livery to be Mr. Pembroke's, at which, Sylvia, I acknowledge with my usual frankness, (at least to you) that my foolish fluttering heart did vibrate a little, that is certain;—but joy and astonishment considerably encreased, when I saw Harry hand Charlotte from the chaise; I flew down stairs with the utmost precipitancy, lest she should occasion disorder in the Countess or Papa, by a too sudden appearance, and was fortunate enough to see her first.

POOR Charlotte no sooner beheld me, than with visible marks of contrition she grasped my hand, saying, “Dear Emily, let me beg you would convey me somewhere in private for a short time, before I appear before my offended father.”

As I judged this was no very proper time for enquiry, I just satisfied the impatience of my swain, by permitting him to kiss my hand, (which I verily thought he would have devoured) and after charging him not to mention Charlotte's arrival, I conducted my repentant sister, unseen, up a pair of back stairs, to my dressing-room, where my time was employed for above an hour in speaking the most comforting and soothing words, to enable her to go through the intended interview with Papa; after which I left her with Hawley, (who is really a good woman) while I went down stairs to consult with Harry, but I found the youth and Papa together in the saloon.

My dear father, amidst all his unhappy reflections, appeared infinitely rejoiced to see him; and on my entering the room he said, “My dear Emily, where were you when Mr. Pembroke came?”—Then turning to Harry, without waiting my answer, he continued, “How happy am I amidst all my sufferings, to have one child I yet can call so; receive her from me as the greatest blessing you can covet.—Oh! Mr. Pembroke! you know not half her worth,—she is, indeed, a child.”

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This tender speech occasioned the tear to start in my eyes, which Harry observing, and imagining, by Papa's endearing declaration, that he was authorized to regard me from that moment as his own; he caught me in his arms, and pressed my lips with such uncommon fervour, that my face was instantly covered with a crimson glow.

HE soon perceived that he had been rather too violent in his proceeding, therefore gently quitting me, he looked a little silly, but bowed respectfully, and begged my pardon for the liberty he had taken: so penitential a request I could not avoid granting; and then turning to Papa, I said, "You see, dear Sir, how fatal it is to bestow such affectionate epithets on your Emily before this boisterous youth, who has confessed himself my lover; since, no doubt, (nay, I must believe it so as an excuse for him) that was the reason that urged him to be thus daring."

WHEN I had finished this speech, the culprit seemed ready to transgress again; while I, impatient to break the secret of Charlotte's return, appeared not to regard him, but accosted Papa by saying, "You were pleased, dear Sir, to declare just now, that you had one child whom you could call so,—what would my beloved parent say to his Emily, if she should produce him another, on whom he might bestow the same endearing title."

"If you mean Mr. Pembroke, my Emily, (answered Papa) I am certain I shall have no reason to regard him in any other light."

THIS stricture, on my intended design of introducing Charlotte, I did not expect; therefore, for a few moments, in my turn, looked a little disconcerted, while I could observe infinite delight sparkle in the eyes of my enraptured swain.—However, soon recovering myself, I continued to address Papa by saying, "That you entertain an high opinion of Mr. Pembroke I know, Sir, otherwise I am certain you would not recommend him to your Emily; but, for the present, let me assure my dear Papa, that he is not the child I would be thought

to mean—at this instant I would fain be understood to speak of—another daughter!—Yes, my ever dear and honoured father, (continued I, observing he started at the word) would you permit your Emily to introduce, were it possible, your repentant Charlotte?”

“Charlotte! (hastily interrupted Papa)—mock not my sufferings, child;—that ungracious girl is too far corrupted by her abandoned mother, ever to think of returning to her duty.”

“Be not too hasty in your conclusions, Sir Robert, (replied Harry, smiling) may I beg you would answer me one question, which is, that if I, or any other person had convinced Miss Musgrave of her error, and had then conducted the trembling contrite maid to your presence; would you extend a parent’s pity, and—forgive her?”

“HEAVEN grant I had the trial! (returned Papa) but, till that arrives, I know not how I should behave;—yet how came you, dear Pembroke, (continued he) to know the least of what I have suffered?”—To which Harry answered, “A short time, I hope, Sir Robert, may clear up this and greater mysteries:—but let me resume the topic of Miss Musgrave; let me hear you say you would forgive her;—you must—indeed you must.”

HERE I joined Mr. Pembroke with such ardour, that Papa, greatly moved at our united endeavours to gain a pardon for one whom, as yet, he could not believe so near, at length replied, “Your solicitations have almost subdued my resentment; and was my Charlotte present, appearing with that contrition you seem to think she feels for her past indiscretions, I believe—I should—forgive her.”

THE door now, on a sudden, opened, and my sister rushed in, throwing herself at Papa’s feet, and exclaiming, “Let me then, unworthy as I am, receive the wished-for pardon from you, my dear, my injured parent!”—Her feelings were too exquisite for farther utterance, but a torrent of tears soon gave ease, and clasping Papa’s extended hand, she said, “And does my indulgent father

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condescend to forgive his repenting daughter?"—"I do—I do— (answered he) rise Charlotte—thou art again my child."

HERE the sensations of both (nay, indeed, of us all) were too affecting to be properly described; but, after mutual congratulations, and Harry's promising to deliver a particular account to Papa, of every circumstance I have before related, it was agreed that I should break the affair to the Countess as soon as possible;—but this intent proved needless, by her Ladyship's now entering the saloon, having been apprized, in a proper manner, by her woman Hawley.

SHE received Charlotte with polite affection, yet betrayed a degree of heart-felt woe on enquiring concerning Lady Susan.

MR. Pembroke waved the subject, by only saying, that though he could not directly promise, yet he sincerely hoped that a short time would return her Ladyship to her duty, and make her conceive a just abhorrence of her indiscretions.—He then endeavoured to turn the conversation on more general topics, which, at length, had the desired effect; therefore I shall, for the present, Sylvia, follow my swain's laudable example; and, after wishing our dear Mrs. Ramsay a speedy recovery, I will drop a subject that has, for so long a time, employed the scribbling faculties of your

EMILY MUSGRAVE.

LETTER XXVI.

Miss BEVERLY to Miss MUSGRAVE.

WERE it possible, Emily, my present sufferings could receive alleviation, the return of your sister to her duty would considerably delight me;—but, alas! the severe illness under which the worthy Mrs. Ramsay at this time labours, entirely engrosses my every faculty, and all sensations of joy appear fled and gone from the bosom of your Sylvia.

THE indisposition, which we at first flattered ourselves was trivial, has greatly encreased; the dear woman is

now attacked with a violent fever, whose excruciating remorseless force seems to baffle the skill of her physicians.

POOR Frederic's filial duty and affection is now so strongly depicted in every word and action, that he never appeared so amiable as at this crisis. — But as tender sensations, at this melancholy period, would be improperly expressed, we seem as brother and sister, mutually engaged in one common affliction; while our every assistance is jointly allied, to administer all the relief in our power to our dear—our beloved mother.

ALL gracious heaven, prevent what I this instant dread—Oh! Emily! I am now summoned to attend her.—Pray for your friend—pray for my more than mother.—Adieu.

IN CONTINUATION.

OH! my Emily! what a scene am I returned from! if possible, let me command my eyes from flowing till I have told you all, lest tears should obliterate the traces of my pen.

ON entering the chamber, I beheld the dear woman raised in bed by her attendants, and Frederic on his knees by her side; —when she saw me, she ordered every one to leave the room but her son and myself; —I then flew to the bed-side, and kissing her burning hand, said, as I moistened it with my tears, “My dearest Madam, what can your Sylvia do to give you ease?” —

REGARDING me with eyes exquisite tenderness, she said, “My beloved Miss Beverly, it is not this moment only that I have been sensible of your affection; —but as the decrees of all-gracious Providence are inscrutable, and finding myself possessed of reason at this instant, I have sent for you and Frederic that I may disclose a secret, which, till now, I was unable to discover.” — Then looking at us both with equal placid love, she continued, addressing herself more particularly to Frederic.

“My dear children (you especially, my son) have often hinted, that there was some mystery in my life which I ever strove to conceal; and though to the will of

heaven I readily submit in all its divine decrees, yet, as my recovery appears doubtful, the time is now arrived, when, in consideration of your being both equally dear—both your just curiosities shall be satisfied.

“YOU, Frederic, shall no longer ask in vain, who the father was from whom you owe your being;—take this key, and in that little cabinet, which dear Miss Beverly has often admired, you will find the whole detail of my life and misfortunes.” Then turning to me, and pressing my hand with a mother’s fondness, she softly said, “mayst thou be happy, my sweet child;—I cannot wonder at Frederic’s being conquered by thy amiable perfections:—Yes, my dear Sylvia, I have long in secret beheld his passion, and though his birth may claim some merit, alas! in every other respect he falls far short of thy deserts.—But I can no more.”

PRESSING our hands with a divine composure in her uplifted eyes, she blessed us both, and then begged to be alone.

WE left the chamber, and, after sending in the nurse and Jenny, I retired to my dressing-room, where I gave free scope to my with-held tears; yet in all my deep affliction, the calm tranquility, with which the dear woman seemed to wait the king of terrors, brought to my mind the following words of the inspired Doctor Young, who, with devout energy, declares:

The chamber, where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileg’d beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heav’n.

ADIEU, my Emily, the curiosity I have long had, to know the secret of this dear woman’s life, seems, at present, entirely suspended, by the only wish that now employs my every thought—a constant prayer for her recovery—in this I am sensible my friend will join with her

SYLVIA BEVERLY.

LETTER XXVII.

From the same, to the same.

REJOICE with me, my Emily, when I shall inform you that our dear, our amiable Mrs. Ram-
 day is now judged out of danger. —Last night, thro' the
 care and skill of her physician, assisted by the indulgent
 hand of heaven, the fever abated, and is now brought to
 an intermission, which they pronounce favourable to our
 wishes; so that we may yet expect a longer continu-
 ance of her valuable life.

WERE I only to express my joy and gratitude for
 this unexpected blessing, I should write for hours on no
 other subject; but I must now listen to the ardent de-
 sire of restrained curiosity, and attend Frederic, who,
 though he has been in possession of the secret mentioned
 in my last these three days, has yet forbore inspecting it,
 till the welcome declaration of his mother's being past
 danger; and even when that was pronounced, he, with
 the most filial duty, offered to return the sealed paper to
 her hands, without gratifying that curiosity he has so
 long wished to indulge.

THE dear woman applauded his respectful restraint, yet
 told him, with a benign smile, that she could no longer
 doubt his discretion, and therefore bade him commu-
 nicate the contents to me; and, knowing the friendship
 that subsists between me and my Emily, she has also
 consented to my imparting the whole to you. —I am this
 instant desired to attend to this long-concealed history of
 our dear and amiable mother, and will, as soon as possible,
 transmit the whole to my friend, till when farewell. S. B.

IN CONTINUATION.

I AM just returned from hearing the important se-
 cret. —Important indeed, Emily! —Good heavens! —
 what a transition, from one extreme to the other, has
 been experienced by this amiable — Oh! my friend!
 I know not what word should follow! — yet a woman

she undoubtedly is, though raised by birth to claim (according to the stile of worldly distinctions) a higher title!—

By me, indeed, without that consideration, were it possible to bestow a more exalted epithet on one of the female race, the highest might be justly appropriated to the amiable, the suffering — Lady Silena Mellville.

METHINKS I can observe the surprise my Emily betrays, at reading this new-acquired title of her, who so lately was regarded only as our dear Mrs. Ramsay ;— but let me desist from farther digression, and, by recommending the inclosed to your perusal, solve every imaginary doubt.—When you have gone through the whole, let me have your unfeigned sentiments on some particulars, which, at present, rather flatter than depress the hopes of—your

SYLVIA BEVERLY.

The Memoirs of Lady SILENA MELLVILLE.

Written by herself.

IF being descended from a long race of illustrious ancestors (whose sons might boast of bravery, and their daughters of virtue) could insure felicity, the writer of these sheets had not felt the rigour of an adverse fate: But, alas! not birth, fortune, or (what is infinitely more valuable) honour and integrity, can exclude the approach of rigorous misfortunes; especially when one alien from moral rectitude, by fatal indiscretion, urges the force of dire calamity.

I was the youngest child of the Earl of *****—a nobleman of considerable fortune in the North of Scotland, possessing an estate of fifteen thousand pounds a year, besides a large sum in the Bank of England, designed as portions for me and my sister: this was accumulated by prudent savings from the family estate, which was entirely to descend to our only brother Lord Mellville, a youth of shining qualifications, and intrinsic worth.

It had pleased heaven to deprive us of our mother, when we were so young, that through the indulgence of a tender father, we hardly felt the loss.

THUS happy we lived, respected and beloved, till the fatal rebellion in Scotland, in the year 1745. I was, at that time, about eighteen; my sister, Lady Margaret, a year older; and our brother just twenty two.

WHEN the first news of this traiterous intent reached my father, loyalty and affection to the best of sovereigns, engaged him to use his utmost efforts, to assist as much as possible against the encroachments of the young Chevalier; for which purpose he raised, from his own purse, a regiment of valiant Highlanders, and determined to command them himself as Colonel, intending that my brother should act under him as Captain. But what was my father's surprise and disappointment, when, on mentioning the proposal to his son, who had been absent from home a short time, he heard him not only refuse the offer, but utter the most treasonable and reviling speeches against the sacred person of his lawful sovereign.

OUR worthy father's amazement did not hinder his assuming a parent's authority; and stimulated with an honest and loyal zeal, he demanded of his son, where he had acquired such new and destructive principles? charging him, as he valued his blessing, to renounce his error, or never see him more.

MY brother, who, till that fatal hour, had never disputed a father's command, but ever yielded an implicit obedience, now began to utter such expressions, as fully convinced the Earl, that some insidious stickler of the Romish church had been instilling his peniculous counsels into the hitherto uncorrupted bosom of his son.

OUR dear father, therefore, strove at first, by mild and gentle methods, to return him to the duty he owed his king, his country, and himself, (and what was more to be esteemed) his eternal welfare;—but whoever the vile agent was, he had found means to plant his destructive notions too firmly to be easily removed, so that my father had the mortification to find his utmost efforts were as ineffectual, as the like means would have been to restrain the fury of the savage tyger, or more furious pard.

Perceiving every argument was vain, resentment succeeded paternal forbearance;—zeal for his sovereign's

cause instigated him to forget the ties of nature, and he instantly banished our deluded brother from his house and presence; who, immediately, with a daring effrontery, pronounced—"Duty farewell!—the only portion I will now possess, shall be a steady adherence to the hopes and fortune of Charles the third."

WITH these words he left us, and we never beheld him more!—

THE behaviour of this insatuated youth sat heavy on the heart of our father, and, to add farther to his affliction, my sister, Lady Margaret, in less than three months, was privately married to a young adventurer in the Pretender's army.

THIS was a fresh opening to a painful wound, so that the Earl, my father, appeared sinking under the weight of such accumulated distress. — Never shall I forget his pathetic speech, the eve before the decisive battle at Culloden,—taking me in his arms, he said, weeping over me, "My dear, my beloved Silena, what a miserable situation is mine! duty to my King calls me to exert my whole power to assist him.—Yet how can I think of engaging in combat, when, perhaps, your brother, my ungracious boy, may fall by a father's hand!—Distracting thought!—But hence thou soft parental fondness,—nor longer enervate my fluctuating heart!—Has he not broken through every tender tie, by spurning duty and affection from him?—He no longer regards me as a father, then why should I suffer this effeminate weakness!—No, let him find, that though gentle entreaties availed nothing, I have yet an arm to punish:—To punish!—whom?—Alas, my child!—yet, yet he is my son!"—

IN this distracting suspense, between loyalty and parental tenderness, did my unhappy father pass the night; I, who had ever loved my brother, exerted the most persuasive arguments to engage the Earl not to approach the field of battle;—the whole hours that preceded daylight were spent in such attempts, and I had just obtained his promise of staying with me, when Lord

M——, an intimate friend and companion of my father's arrived, and, with the utmost precipitancy, urged him to the field.

THE calls of honour and a parent's fears now, for a few moments, strove for superiority; but, alas! the former, assisted by the powerful eloquence of Lord M——, obtained the victory;—in a fatal hour he went, leaving me, his weeping child, overwhelmed with woe.

It is impossible to describe the anguish that I felt for many succeeding hours; and yet even that anguish was heightened, when early in the evening a litter arrived, whereon lay my beloved father covered with wounds and blood. Heavens! what a sight was this!—was it possible for a child to bear the severe conflict, without experiencing the most excruciating grief, or sinking beneath the pressure of affliction!—This task I was destined to endure;—the shock was too much for my tender frame to support:—Nature, unequal to the trial, shrunk within; and I lay for some hours without sense or motion.

WHEN I once more beheld the light, I found myself on a sofa, supported by servants; and near me a person, whom I did not then remember, but afterwards recollected to be the nephew of Lord M——, a young gentleman named Hamilton, who had solicited my father's consent to be admitted as a lover. After staring wildly round me for some moments, and at length remembering the dismal occasion of my sufferings, I hastily enquired for my father; the servants answered me by evasions, which not proving satisfactory, in the height of distraction I addressed myself to Mr. Hamilton, who advanced towards the sofa with marks of respectful tenderness, accompanied with persuasive eloquence to administer all the consolation in his power; though at the same time, by distant hints, he left me no hopes of seeing my father alive. Whether it was the will of heaven that prepared my mind to meet the fatal truth with proper resignation, or whether it was owing to the manner in which it was delivered, I know not, but I

received the account of the Earl's death with infinitely more composure than might have been expected by any one who had beheld my sufferings at the sight of the mangled body.

A CHILD's duteous afflictions I undoubtedly felt ; but not with that violence which might have proved fatal to my life :—yet how did my tears encrease, when, two days after this unhappy catastrophe, Mr. Hamilton informed me in what manner I had been deprived both of a father and a brother.—His affecting narrative was as follows :

AFTER the Earl had been engaged for some hours in the laudable employment of aiding his sovereign's cause, unfortunately, in the heat of the battle, he observed my unhappy brother (who had the command of a detachment from the rebel army) surrounded by a party of the king's troops, and whose death seemed inevitable, by an impossibility of his escaping.

PATERNAL tenderness, at that instant, rose superior to loyal considerations, the Earl quitted his post, rushed to the rescue of his beloved son, and turned his sword against those who aimed at my brother's life. A gentleman of rank in the king's interest fell by his hand,—another was wounded,—in short, he seemed to effect almost incredible achievements ; till at length overpowered by numbers, both the father and the son fell unhappy victims to the fatal indiscretion of my deluded brother !

BOTH were stigmatized as traitors, and my father's conduct was so aggravated to those in power, that the family estate became forfeited to the crown.

THIS latter part of my misfortune, I did not then so much as think of, but it was a considerable time before I recovered the united loss sustained on that fatal day.

Mr. Hamilton's former prepossessions in my favour were nothing lessened by these misfortunes ; on the contrary, he expressed so much both of the lover and the friend, that I became sensible of his exalted merit, and promised to be his whenever he received his uncle's

consent for an union. Lord M—— was then in London, whither he went immediately after the victory; and this nobleman acting in the capacity of a parent to my lover, by his being early left an orphan, it was highly necessary to wait his approbation; and this was regarded as no obstacle to my wishes, in consideration of that friendship, that for so many years had subsisted between his lordship and my deceased father. But how were we disappointed, when on his return, and being informed of his nephew's desire, he not only expressed his entire disapprobation, but strictly enjoined him, as he valued his protection, to break off all intercourse with me for ever; alledging, as a cause for his resentment to the unfortunate Silena, the fatal error of my brother, and the traiterous behaviour (as he termed it) of the Earl my father.

MR. Hamilton would have palliated these severe reflections, but his uncle remained inexorable; telling him, with cruel taunts, to advise me to fill up the measure of my rebellious family, by espousing some desperate adventurer in the conquered troops of the ignorant Pretender, who might perhaps advance me to that honour and affluence I had lately lost.

My lover, though faithful to his sovereign's interest, could not bear these wounding sarcasms on me, whom he regarded in the most tender light; he therefore accused his uncle with malevolence, in charging me with the unhappy errors of my family. This irritated his Lordship beyond the hopes of reconciliation, who immediately forbid him his house; and delivering up the writings of a small patrimonial estate in England, told him that he might follow the bent of his dastardly inclination, and live in a state of scorn and penury, with a woman who had only a pretty face to recommend her.

So saying, he flung from him, and Mr. Hamilton soon obeyed the cruel injunction of his uncle. He flew to me, related the whole conversation, except the many rigid expressions of his Lordship, reflecting on the memories of the unfortunate deceased.

He then urged me to make him happy, used many persuasive arguments to reconcile our disappointments, and observed, that where an union of hearts was complete, there wanted few other requisites to secure a permanent felicity.

In all his reasonings there appeared considerable weight; Love being a most powerful advocate to strengthen his request.

I LISTENED with pleasure to his persuasive eloquence, and, considering only the future prospect of being united to the man I sincerely loved, consented to his desire. But as Scotland now became disgusting to us both, we determined to fix our residence in some retired village in England;—the county of Norfolk was preferred, as therein Mr. Hamilton's estate was situated, the income of which amounted only to three hundred pounds a year.—A trifle indeed to both, in consideration of those expectations we had the greatest reason to imagine would have fallen to our lot.

I HAD indeed flattered myself of possessing half the sum which the earl my father had placed in the bank of England, and which he designed as portions for me and my sister; not knowing whether that also would be forfeited for the unhappy transgressions before-mentioned. I had never heard of Lady Margaret since her clandestine union; therefore could not tell whether a demand had ever been made of what she undoubtedly imagined her right; but while my thoughts were busied in considering how to apply for this money on my arrival in England, a circumstance appeared to dash all my expectations, and made me more than ever bemoan the fatal error of my deluded brother.

In looking over some papers of Lord Mellville's, which had lain unregarded since his leaving us, I found a letter directed to him, which was written in the French language, and on inspection perceived, with infinite surprise, the signature of Charles R. at the bottom. I then proceeded to read the contents, which consisted of proper acknowledgments for the receipt of five

thousand pounds; also for the promise of as much more, with faithful assurances of its being repaid with double the value, on the writer's ascending the throne of England.

So considerable a sum I was for a long time unable to imagine how my brother had procured; but by proceeding still farther in my search, I had the mortification to find, by copies of his own letters to different commanders in the Pretender's army, that, irritated by my father's behaviour, he had, in the height of resentment, procured a false power of attorney, whereby he was entitled to sell out the whole sum from the bank, which our indulgent parent had intended for my disobedient sister and myself; so that my hopes were entirely destroyed, and, except an inconsiderable sum of money arising from the sale of the household effects of the Earl my late dear father, I came a beggar to the arms of Mr. Hamilton:—of this I faithfully assured him before our union, but the generous youth received the declaration with such elevation of sentiment, that instead of repining at my poverty, I really rejoiced, that by this circumstance I was assured of his disinterested affection.

ON our arrival at London we stayed but a short time, and then proceeded to Norfolk, where we soon settled ourselves at S——, a small but neat village, Mr. Hamilton's estate laying contiguous to our dwelling, (which little habitation he purchased for a small sum) and here it was I can justly say I experienced a great degree of that happiness, which many gloomy and cynical writers would insinuate is not to be enjoyed in this mortal state of existence;—happy in each other, and by united efforts ever desirous to preserve the lamp of love alive, we possessed real felicity, without which glittering domes and velvet beds are dungeons fraught with horror!—Here all was calm tranquility and joy,—Friendship rivetted our willing fetters, and Love might be said to reign untainted, and without the least alloy to damp the ardour of its purest flame.

AMBITION, with its towering head, received no welcome reception from either; and I, willing entirely

to affront the gigantic phantom from any disagreeable intrusions, resigned all pretensions to that title which my birth might have claimed; glorying more in being accosted by my poorest neighbour with the simple appellation of Mrs. Hamilton, than I once had been, when address'd by the first peer of the realm as Lady Silena Melville.

Our days flowed on in uninterrupted harmony, and wore a continual round of the same delightful employments. To give a journal of one day, might suffice to form an idea of the circling year.

We rose early, and after paying our sincerest adorations to the Author of our being, we walked (when the weather permitted) for about half an hour, in a pleasant garden, which owed its blooming fragrance to the labour of my hand, and then returned to breakfast; after which Mr. Hamilton either amused himself with reading in his study, or walking over his grounds, which were let to several poor but honest farmers, with whom he would discourse, and seldom failed of giving me infinite delight at his return, by repeating their artless harangues.

DURING his excursions, I amused myself in domestic affairs, or by endeavouring to alleviate the diseases of my fellow-creatures, by administering every assistance in my power;—for which purpose I studied simple Nature more than physic; and by many years observation I have learned, that small assistance from foreign drugs is necessary, our own clime producing in almost every hedge or mead, innocent and efficacious remedies for the natural disorders incident to industrious mortals:—by this I would be understood to mean such as the temperate laborious peasant may be subject to;—as for those diseases acquired by luxurious living, sloth, or debauchery, they never came under my immediate notice; therefore, perhaps those who bring upon themselves violent ailments, must have recourse to violent medicines.

INFINITE were the rewards I received from my grateful patients;—no cures ever performed by a Fo-

thergill,—a Bromfield,—or a Hawkins, met with greater applause, or received greater acknowledgments; it is true, no golden fees were tendered, but I received what I valued infinitely more,—honest prayers and unfeigned blessings from guileless rustics!—these amply repaid the utmost of my ready assistance.

WHEN we had dined, we either walked, or amused ourselves in receiving or paying some social visits, amongst a few select friends we had made on our first arrival, the chief of whom was the amiable Lady Beverly, mother to Sir Edward, who was the only person I acquainted with the secret of my former life.

THE day was ended in the same manner as we had begun it, by begging protection of that Power we had ever adored. Thus tranquil and unscathed passed our lives, without experiencing any of those stings of ever-waking conscience, the constant attendants of remorse and guilt.

TO add still farther to our felicity, in less than a twelvemonth after our residing at S——, I was permitted to indulge my delighted Frederic by presenting him with a son.—Never was an heir to the greatest estate in England received with greater joy; the honest tenants seemed enulous to express their artless transports.—Rural rejoicings were celebrated through the whole village, and every face betokened delight and pleasure.

I GAVE him the name of his enraptured father, earnestly praying, while it was expressing, that he might resemble him in every instance of his life.

IN this request I have been hitherto gratified, since, at that moment, I only wished him to inherit those laudable perfections which my beloved Frederic then possessed.—Oh! thou divine Disposer of events! grant he may escape that future, fatal rock of indiscretion, which wrecked his father's peace—his mother's joy!

IN less than three years after this happy period, Lord Brampton, a young nobleman of considerable fortune, arrived at S——, to spend a few summer months with

his uncle and aunt Masham, two worthy people, with whom we had contracted a strict intimacy from our first settling near them.

THEY informed us of his intended visit, and expressed great satisfaction in introducing their nephew to our acquaintance; and, indeed, his Lordship seemed to merit our utmost approbation:—his person and conversation were both extremely agreeable;—he had acquired, by travel, a competent knowledge of men and manners, without appearing to have received any of those taints so frequently incurred by the grand tour;—in short, the only foible I could at length perceive, was one adherent to his native country,—I mean play;—yet even this would he frequently condemn, when any topic on that nature was started; though I have the greatest reason to believe, that his complaisance to the company, who expressed their disapprobation of this pursuit, (joined to a design to screen a cruel intention) occasioned him to acquiesce with their opinions. How often have I heard him declare his abhorrence of the intoxicating employment, particularly in those, whose elevation and rank should oblige them to set better examples: and once, with pleasure, I heard him relate the following anecdote of Casimir, the second King of Poland.

WHILE Casimir was Prince of Sandimir, he won, at play, all the money of one of his nobility, who, incensed at his ill fortune, struck the Prince a blow on the ear in the heat of passion;—he fled immediately from justice, but being pursued and overtaken, he was condemned to lose his head; yet the generous Casimir determined otherwise. “I am not surprised (said he) at the gentleman’s conduct;—for not having it in his power to revenge himself on Fortune, no wonder he should attack her favourite.”—After which he revoked the sentence, returned the nobleman his money, and declared that he alone was faulty; as he encouraged, by his example, a pernicious practice, that might terminate in the ruin of hundreds of his people.

LORD Brampton would dwell on this circumstance, with such seeming approbation of the Prince's conduct, as would have inclined any one to a belief of his desisting such pursuits ;—but, alas ! in this he only covered his dissingenuity, as, by fatal experience, the wretched Silena found.

A SIMILARITY of sentiments, in every other respect but this, (which his Lordship took great care to conceal) occasioned him and my beloved Mr. Hamilton to be constant associates ; of this I at first sincerely rejoiced, but soon,—too soon, had I reason for a contrary opinion ; and, in a short time, the specious mask of friendship left the designing foe open to my view.

As the insinuating Brampton judged the house of his relations would be an improper place for him to effect his cruel purpose, and dreading my scrutinizing sight, he would frequently engage my dear credulous Frederic to accompany him to a small villa about ten miles distant, where resided one of his companions, who had learnt, like the perfidious peer, to gild the designing gambler with an appearance of artless sincerity.

I SHALL not dwell on many particulars of this destructive connection, or repeat my tender admonitions to Mr. Hamilton to be cautious of his peace,—the which was occasioned by his frequent returns to S——, with evident marks of having lost that serenity he formerly possessed. All I could urge was ineffectual, he had drank too deeply of the intoxicating draught, which overwhelmed every tender consideration ;—not the caresses of his faithful wife, nor the harmless smiles of his innocent boy could prevail ;—and though his outward behaviour testified the same affection, his mind was fatally alienated from those laudable duties, which before proved him the husband and the parent.

A THOUSAND racking apprehensions filled my breast ; the serenity of my life was clouded by a prophetic imagination of those ills I was doomed to suffer ; and, notwithstanding I would frequently endeavour to resist anticipation, the horrid prospect of what I dreaded, would

rush upon my mind like a merciless torrent, and bear down all before it.—Small rays of hope would sometimes intervene, at which, like a sinking wretch, anxious to secure the least shadow of preservation, I would endeavour to reach; but even those, slender as they appeared, vanished in one moment, on the receipt of the following letter, which involved the wretched Silena in those real evils she had so frequently apprehended: It came from my dear deluded Frederic; the words were these:

“DISTRACTED!—ruined!—both in mind and fortune!—How shall I be able to relate my situation to my—Silena?—Wife, I dare not say!—No, my injured love, my fatal indiscretion has broken the tender tie.—Curse on my credulity, which engaged me to listen to the destructive artifice!—the fatal pursuit of infernal play, to which I have been drawn by the perfidious Brampton, has wrecked my every happiness.—How shall I tell thee that thou art—Oh! horror, horror!—thou art, my Silena, beggared by thy——I dare not name the soft endearing title—curse on the fatal occasion that forbids!—But I rave; rave in all the bitterness of madness!—my disordered brain will not permit me to dwell on the dreadful subject long enough to relate particulars—let it suffice to say, that I have not one shilling in the world that I can call my own:—all, all devoted to the infernal artifice of Lord Brampton.—He is in possession of all, and, perhaps, this very night may turn thee out to want and penury!—My child too!—Distraction! do I deserve the name of parent, who thus deprives him of that little all he had a right to expect?—Beggared by a father’s hand!—By heaven! I cannot bear the thought!—Yet let me summon the small remains of reason I have left, and endeavour to be calm while I make this last request.—Such it must be, Silena, since it is utterly impossible I can ever support another interview with one I have so much wronged.—Banished from your sight, I will endeavour to expiate your wrongs by a voluntary retirement;—to some se-

questered retreat I will fly, far from the haunts of vile designing men, where, in supplication to offended heaven, I will breathe forth prayers for your continual preservation.

“ THIS then is my request,—which, by the past remembrance of our former loves,—by every consideration, both human and divine, I beg you to fulfil.—Never let my injured boy know the secret of his unhappy father:—Conceal from him his birth and hereditary honours, that he may not curse my memory:—Beggared as he is, let him never know the cause.—This I strictly enjoin, with only one condition, which is, that when it shall please heaven to call thy spotless soul,—when thou apprehendest thy last moments are arriving, then, and not before, thou mayst divulge the important secret, provided he appears discreet enough to bear the alarming truth with fortitude.

“ MAY heaven preserve him safe from that fatal error which has proved his father’s ruin!—May its almighty succour raise my Silena a friend, by whose beneficence she and my injured boy may be preserved from that penury my fatal indiscretion has occasioned.

“ SURE the mention of heaven has endued me with calmness;—my frenzy seems abated by its powerful name, else can it be imagined I could guide my pen thus tranquil and serene amidst a thousand self-accusing horrors?—therefore, lest I should rave again, and wound still more thy gentle bosom, let me haste and bid a last farewell to thee and to my boy.—Remember, strictly remember, my beloved Silena, those injunctions relative to my fatal secret; which believing you will fulfil, is the only satisfaction at this time experienced by him, who in happier days could subscribe the endearing titles of—lover,—friend,—and—husband!—now, alas! only the wretched, (would I could add—guiltless)

“ FREDERIC HAMILTON.

—P. S. Let not my Silena’s compassion endeavour to seek her unhappy criminal; all search will be in vain, since before this reaches S——, I shall be at such a distance as will elude all enquiries.”

WORDS cannot describe the least of my painful sensations when I had gone through the whole of this dreadful letter, which took up a considerable time ;— frequently did it drop from my hand, and often did my streaming tears obliterate the heart-wounding contents. In all the horror of distraction I snatched to my bosom my harmless infant, who was engaged in innocent play near me, pressed him with such emotion, and shedding such a torrent of tears, that the little cherub was affrighted at my ardour, shrunk from my embrace, and seemed by his amazement to demand the reason of my woe.

I ADDRESSED myself to him, unmindful of his tender age, saying, “ My dear boy, my beloved Frederick, we never shall again behold thy father! — He is gone, my love, for ever fled from thee and thine unhappy mother.”

AT these words, as if he understood the source of his own wretchedness and mine, clasping his little arms around my neck, he said, “ Hope papa will come again.”

QUITE overcome by this innocent reply, I had just power to disengage myself from him, and sunk in a chair near me ; my sweet infant experienced the utmost affliction which his little heart was capable of ; he climbed upon my knees, and with his artless embrace seemed to insist on a mother’s care ;—and even in this distracted situation, methought an inward monitor suggested to me to live for him.

THIS, in some measure, roused me from indulging that deep-felt sorrow which might have endangered my life, or at least my senses. The power of innocence prevailed ; I put myself under the immediate direction of Providence, and implored its gracious assistance to enable me to bear this severe trial with becoming fortitude.

As soon as I could relate the fatal truth with tolerable composure, I made Lady Beverly acquainted with the whole. This amiable friend (who had ever from our first knowledge of each other treated me as a child) shared my affliction, and promised me all the assistance

in her power; purposing to inform Mr. and Mrs. Masham of the whole transaction, on their return from London, (whither they went on the illness of a relation a short time before this unhappy event) and hoping they might convince Lord Brampton of his faulty conduct, and prevail with him to relinquish his pretensions to the estate which my deluded Frederic had imprudently lost.

BUT alas! we were under the power of a man who now appeared the real villain, which character, as I before hinted at first, he attempted to conceal. In less than a week after the receipt of the foregoing dreadful letter, while my heart yet bled at every recollection, I received an epistle from his Lordship, filled with the most fulsome and disgusting phrases, and (oh prostitution of the name) urged love for me as an excuse for his perfidy to my unsuspecting Frederic; and intimated, that if I would consent to an action my soul ever shrunk to think on, he would not only re-instate me in that independence Mr. Hamilton had lost, but would make a considerable addition thereto.

STUNG to the heart at such infamous proposals, I answered his mean, his cruel letter, in words to this effect.

“ WERE it possible that I ever could have imagined such vile sentiments dwelt under the appearance of professed friendship, I should cease to wonder at the undeserved treatment I have received from Lord Brampton; who, not content with defrauding (I can give it no other title) an unsuspecting man of his little all, wounding his peace of mind for ever, occasioning him to fly the embraces of a beloved wife and harmless infant, and wandering in a vain search of that happiness you have robbed him of,—but must even insult that wretched wife with infamous proposals!—proposals, which were she but to listen to, would sink her as deep in guilt as you already are.—No, my Lord, believe the unhappy Silena when she assures you, that she will meet staring want and penury without a murmur,—happy in the consciousness of that virtue you can never rob her of.

"THE time may perhaps arrive, when my beloved boy may be able to call your lordship to a severe account for the injuries you have perpetrated and intended to both his parents;—then, Brampton, tremble!—the hand of unerring justice, assisted by honest integrity, will surely punish thy cruel and undeserved behaviour;—how will thy perfidy stand the shock?—affrighted and appalled, methinks I see thee vanquished, conquered by a boy!—but remember, that that boy will be aided by the justice thou wilt want!

"I BRAVE the utmost malice of thy cruelty;—come then, my lord, fill up the measure of thy noble achievements, and turn the poor Silena and her infant from their home;—leave them exposed to indigence and misery, whilst thou revelest in luxury and ease, by an addition to thy fortune, raised on the ruin of a man, who fondly mistook a villain for a friend.

"THINK not that I will be an humble suppliant, I despise the thought!—for aided by Heaven and Virtue, sooner than change situations with the affluent Lord Brampton, I will continue, for an age of poverty, the wretched, the injured,

SILENA HAMILTON."

THIS letter had the effect I foretold, in two days after I sent it, the steward arrived with full authority, under my deluded Frederic's hand and seal, to take possession of every thing, except our cloaths and furniture.

I WAS aware of this, and, therefore, accepted the invitation of the Lady Beverly to be with her.—It is impossible to describe the affecting countenances of the honest tenants, when they found themselves under their new landlord;—all ages, from the grandfather to the child of ten years old, grieved at our misfortunes; tho' I begged the fatal truth might be concealed as much as possible, for fear of any reflections on the memory of my beloved Mr. Hamilton.—But my tell-tale countenance fully betrayed some calamity, the which was soon whispered in uncertain conjectures through the whole village,—which made me wish for a removal from that once loved retreat.—The amiable Lady Beverly per-

ceived my desire, yet took no notice of it, till the arrival of her son, (the worthy Sir Edward) about a year and a half after.

HE returned from Portugal, at which place he had been deprived of his Lady, who went to Lisbon in hopes of receiving benefit from the air of that climate, she being in a deep decline.

HIS lovely little Sylvia, attended by her nurse, accompanied him to S——, she was at that time an infant not quite a twelvemonth old, but beauteous as a cherub. Sir Edward possessed the same benign disposition as his amiable mother, and being made acquainted with my unhappy story, instantly promised me his friendship and assistance.—Soon perceiving (notwithstanding my grateful attachment to Lady Beverly) that S—— was disagreeable, since my cruel separation from Mr. Hamilton, he generously proposed my residing at a house of his at C——, in the county of ——, which is my present habitation, and where I have dwelt ever since my dear Frederic was little more than five years old.

I HAD heard nothing more from the cruel Lord Brampton, whose uncle and aunt Masham never returned to S——, they both dying in a short time after each other while at London, of a putrid fever, with which their relation had expired the day after they reached the capital; — and by which occurrence Vice seemed to be rewarded, as Lord Brampton was become possessed of considerable legacies by the bequests of both, who, ignorant of his vile action and intent, had heaped additional riches on one undeserving of their notice or regard.

How could a man, possessed of such affluence, think of detaining the little support of a family, made miserable by his cruel and perfidious artifices? — But in that bosom where Vice reigns, every social and beneficent principle is totally extirpated! — Oh! how different was the humane, the disinterested conduct of Sir Edward Beverly! — susceptible of virtuous impressions, he listen-

ed to the dictates of the Heavenly Monitor,—causing my grateful heart to leap for joy.

IN less than three months after his arrival at S——, he informed me, that the house at C—— (named Meadfield) was ready for my reception, whenever I chose to enter it.—I received this generous offer with gratitude, and after taking a tender farewell of Lady Beverly, and the innocent Sylvia, Sir Edward accompanied me and my dear boy hither; I found the house, tho' small, infinitely too elegant for my humble situation, and, therefore, begged that Sir Edward would suffer me to object to many parts of the furniture on that account; but the generous man, with an engaging smile, told me, that his mother had taken care to enable me to support it,—and then drew from his pocket the writings of an estate of an hundred and fifty pounds a year, which I was to receive, free of all deductions, in quarterly payments, from a person he should appoint to collect the rents, without the least trouble or incumbrance to me.

A LOOK of silent admiration was the only return I was able to make for this unparalleled generosity of the amiable Lady Beverly, whose delicacy in bestowing her bounty equally charmed me.

SIR Edward stayed with me a week, promising a constant intercourse. At parting, he said to my dear boy—Here, Frederic, let me beg your acceptance of this, to buy you a little horse, that you may be able, in a year or two, to take a journey, and visit your sister Sylvia, who will always be glad to see you.—Then turning to me, he said, Dear Madam, I am now going to leave you;—may Heaven reward that virtue you have ever adhered to, and preserve you from all attempts of the infamous Lord Brampton,—the which, to effect, I think, at this instant, of an expedient to baffle his designs,—this is, (in order to escape so dangerous an enemy) that you should change your name.

I THANKED him for his caution, saying, with a melancholy smile, that I readily acquiesced with his advice; and, therefore, begged that he would bestow one he

thought most proper ;—he hesitated a few moments, and then said, as I might sometime, in conversation, hint my being born and married in Scotland, he thought that of *Ramsay* would suit, there being many genteel families of that name in the northern parts of Britain.

THIS appellation, therefore, I have ever, since that time, assumed ; and my dear boy, being accustomed to it from so early an age, has always believed it to be his real name.

ON the departure of Sir Edward, I inspected the present he had made to Frederic to purchase the little horse ; but how was I surprised, when I saw a Bank Note of five hundred pounds :—Infinite were my acknowledgments to all-gracious heaven, that had raised me such friends in the hour of need ;—I resigned myself to its inscrutable decrees, and endeavoured the utmost in my power to struggle with that affliction, which the cruel separation of me and my beloved Frederic occasioned.

THUS we lived for some years, without any thing material happening ; at length, when my dear boy was near seventeen, I received the melancholy account of the amiable Lady Beverly's death !—Sir Edward soon after paid me a visit, and presented me with five thousand pounds, bequeathed to me by this dear and worthy friend.——He then informed me that he was appointed Ambassador to Venice, and generously proposed taking Frederic with him ; on whom, he said, he would confer a lucrative and genteel employment, whereby his future fortune might be established.

NOTWITHSTANDING this offer was not to be rejected,—a mother's fondness shrunk at the thoughts of being separated from a duteous and only child, from whom she had not been absent one day since his birth.

The worthy Baronet perceived the conflict between gratitude and maternal softness ; and, with the most exquisite tenderness, endeavoured to alleviate my sensations, by comparing them to his own, in respect of parting from his beloved Sylvia, then twelve years old ; saying, with a beneficent smile, I believe, dear Madam,

we must make an exchange, and while Mr. Ramsay accompanies me to Italy, my Sylvia shall remain with you at Meadfield,—her disposition is such, as, I am sure, you will approve:—She has made already considerable progress in every female accomplishment; and I know no person, under whose instruction and tender care she will make farther improvements, than that of Mrs. Ramsay.

WITHOUT waiting for a reply to this obliging overture, he asked my dear boy if he was willing to attend him.

FREDERIC's young heart, fired with a laudable ambition to promote his future fortune, answered with such ardency of delight and gratitude, that Sir Edward clasped him to his bosom, approved his resolution, and, in short, uttered so many obliging encomiums on my beloved boy, that maternal fondness, before mixed with fears, was now willing to applaud the intended separation.

IN less than a month every thing was ready for their leaving England, and the lovely Miss Beverly was entrusted to my care.

I SHALL not pretend to describe the parting scene, as it may better be imagined than expressed even by the utmost powers of a mother's pen.

AFTER an absence of three years, Frederic returned depressed in expectation, and in deep affliction for the loss of his benefactor, the worthy Sir Edward, who died at Venice.

EVERY other occurrence it is unnecessary to relate, as both my son and dear Miss Beverly are fully acquainted therewith. I have only to add, that after twenty years absence from my beloved Mr. Hamilton, I still remain ignorant as to what has befallen the only man on earth I ever loved.

OH! may the watchful eye of all-bounteous heaven, preserve my Frederic from striking on that fatal rock which proved his father's ruin!—May he ever listen to the friendly admonitions so often inculcated by his generous patron! and may he continue to live in that calm retirement to which he has been accustomed from his birth!—for sensible I am that the more he knows the

insidious ways of men, the more he will be apt to ex-
claim with the young *Numidian* prince,

If knowledge of the world makes men perfidious,
May Juba ever live in ignorance.

LETTER XXVII.

Miss MUSGRAVE to Miss BEVERLY.

I HAVE this instant, Sylvia, finished reading the contents of your obliging packet.—The memoirs of our dear Mrs. Ramsay, though they occasion infinite matter for affecting sensation, contain no more in respect of her birth than I frequently believed;—there ever appeared such elevation of sentiment in her words and actions, as often inclined me to think she was, what we are now convinced she really is.

HAPPY for you, my friend, that Mr. Hamilton's indiscretions carried him from home, by which his amiable lady remained uncertain whether he continued in the land of the living or not;—for my penetration, (of which you know I had ever a competent share) urges me to believe, that could your late father (the worthy Sir Edward) have been assured that her Ladyship was in a state of widowhood, he would have been desirous that she should have taken the name of — *Beverly* — instead of *Ramsay*; and then a certain accomplished youth, and my Sylvia, had been brother and sister in good earnest.

IT is some time since I looked over that part of the prohibitions relating to marriage, which begins with a man's not espousing his grandmother, and so forth; I therefore cannot tell, supposing the union before-mentioned had taken place, whether you and Frederic would have been restrained from entering into that holy state by the alliance of your parents:—however, as from earliest infancy you must have really regarded each other as brother and sister, the very thought of a closer connection might have made you shudder.

BUT these scrupulous niceties are now unnecessary ; therefore compleat the generous intent of Sir Edward towards the mother, by receiving the son as he could wish. You desired my sentiments, Sylvia, so take this advice for the whole.

SOME particulars, you say, “rather flatter than depress your hopes.”—Yes, yes, child, undoubtedly ! you are now certain that your lover’s birth will be no disgrace to you ; and as to any other consideration, I am sensible Smithfield bargains were ever your aversion.

FORGIVE my railery, my sweet girl, but I am actually so much elated by this discovery, that I cannot help those volatile effusions raised by supreme delight.—The Countess, Papa, and Charlotte perceive my transport, but as you gave me no liberty of divulging the secret, I impute to them the recovery of Mrs. Ramsay as a reason ; which name, the amiable Lady Silena Hamilton, must be known by here.

As to family affairs, they remain nearly the same as in my last ;—no news of the fugitive Lady Susan ; however, since Charlotte’s return Papa seems rather more contented, and the Countess’s affliction appears somewhat subsided ; so that I believe I shall soon return to Sedgeley Abbey, having received a pressing invitation from the fair platonic Miss Macclesfield : and notwithstanding my swain’s earnest desire that I should exchange the name of Musgrave for Pembroke, his sighing worship is doomed to wait ; since I am determined not to think of receiving the important epithet of—wife—till some happy turn of affairs may re-instate Papa in his former tranquillity.

WILL not my Sylvia applaud this proof of filial duty ;—certainly.—Self-denial is an arduous task ; and, *entre nous*, were it not for the reason above-mentioned, I should be inclined to pity my sighing Strephon, and even take him for better and for worse.

SIR Rowland was here last Thursday, and I assure you, Sylvia, he was a most powerful advocate for his son, begging that I would shorten the time of Harry’s probation, as he termed it. No excuse that I could

make would satisfy the good old Baronet, till I urged the real cause for my deferring our union; and then, giving me a hearty smack, he swore I was a good girl, and worthy to set an example to my whole sex for duty and affection;—adding, in his blunt manner, that an obedient child could never make a bad wife.

THUS you see, Sylvia, how this pious resolution is applauded; every one bestows many commendations, except ——— I need not say who———but the youth must speak patience to his hopes, for I am absolutely determined to remain inflexible.

CHARLOTTE frequently declares that Mr. Pembroke will be revenged when once I am his, for dallying thus with his passion;—but I entertain a better opinion of him, else I would never stand the trial.—Pray heaven I may not be deceived!—

MEN are strange beings, undoubtedly; frequently exhibiting as different aspects as the two cardinal points of South and North:—in time of courtship warm and unruffled; but in a short period after the priest has pronounced the mystic words, lowering clouds prognosticate the approach of a more furly season;—storms succeed;—the northern tyrant reigns with chilling cold, and we in vain regret the absence of the warm and chearful south.

AT this instant I imagine that I hear my Sylvia exclaim, “For heaven’s sake, Emily, a truce with your provoking comparisons; consider, my friend, I may now look on myself as one partly doomed to experience the justness of your similes:—then pry’thee do not lead me into an anticipation of such dreadful evils.”

WELL, then, I will obey, and for the present no farther animadvert on those opposite materials which constitute the generality of men’s compositions;—however, you need not fear any of those turbulent blusterings from Mr. Ramsay,—alias Hamilton,—especially if he adheres to the interpretation of his name; for I believe, if I am not much mistaken, that of—Frederic—is partly derived from—*Peace*;—a comprehensive word,

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Sylvia,—and which I sincerely hope may preserve you from experiencing the contrary.

I BEG you would present my most ardent respects to the amiable Lady Silena Hamilton, and assure her how sincerely her affecting history has touched the heart of your

EMILY MUSGRAVE.

LETTER XXVIII.

Miss BEVERLY to Mrs. MUSGRAVE.

ONCE again, my Emily, am I capable of enjoying the pleasure which your lively letters ever afford your Sylvia; the recovery of my beloved Lady Silena, has brought once more happiness and joy. Heaven heard my supplication, and now my utmost powers are employed in grateful acknowledgments. With what devout fervour did the amiable sufferer breathe forth ejaculations of praise to the Most High, even in the midst of her excruciating pains; and, though anxious to be mingled with her kindred angels, the tears of Frederic and myself urged her to desire (for our sakes) a further respite.—With what benign expressions of tenderness did she receive her son and me, after we had informed ourselves of her history.

WHEN I entered the chamber, I flew to the chair in which sat this patient sufferer, and pressing her hand to my lips, I exclaimed,—“Will the amiable Lady Silena Hamilton pardon the frequent want of respect which my ignorance of her birth has occasioned!”

REGARDING me with a composed smile, mixed at the same time with expressive tenderness, she said, “My dear Miss Beverly, why this needless complaisance?—Believe me, my child, it is not birth or grandeur which ought alone to claim respect;—a small share of merit proceeds from such considerations.

“THE humble cottager, if possessed of honour and integrity, demands more real veneration from the friends of Virtue, than the titled mortal, decked with many

appendages of his sovereign's favour, if destitute of what the honest peasant may with justice boast.

"OF this you have a striking instance in the vile Lord Brampton;—could the pageantry of titled pomp excuse his breach of friendship, humanity, and every social virtue?—far from it!—But with infinite regret I have often seen, that those whom the indulgent hand of heaven has placed on high, (with the wise intent, no doubt, that they should shine examples worthy of imitation) descend to actions so mean and despicable, that their poorest vassal would blush to be accused of."

I LISTENED with silent admiration to this incomparable woman, who tenderly embracing me, said, "Excuse me, my dear Miss Beverly, for so long dwelling on a subject which I am certain your good sense has often suggested;—but I could not suffer my beloved Sylvia to accuse herself of a want of respect to me, who, had it not been for the unbounded generosity of her family, must have been plunged in all the horrors of abject penury."

SHE would have proceeded, but I begged her to forbear, nor wound my heart with a repetition of her sufferings.

FREDERIC now entering the chamber, a tender scene between this amiable mother and son succeeded. When the transports of both were somewhat subsided, Frederic (fired at the recollection of Lord Brampton's perfidy) dwelt on that part of his injured mother's letter, wherein she prophesied revenge through his means; and after expatiating on the atrocious intent of his Lordship for some time, he said, "Yes, my dearest madam, if it is possible to find the abject villain, this disgrace to peerage, be assured your Frederic's arm will seek revenge, and do justice to yourself and my unhappy father."

THIS was what the amiable Silena feared,—who answered with exquisite tenderness, "My beloved child, forbear!—I want not this proof of thy affection;—it is enough to hear thee express a proper resentment, without seeking to endanger thy valuable life, by attempting

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to punish one, who, (if yet living) may by this time perhaps be sorry for what he has already perpetrated;—even if not so, I charge thee, as thou valuest my blessing or affection, to forego all thoughts of such an undertaking. Already has thy mother known enough of misery, without a child's endangering his life, even in such a cause!—then let me insist on your faithful promise, to think no more on what my aggravated sufferings at that time made me write; when thy infant state hindered all thoughts of danger on thy account, else my pen had not expressed such violent threatenings.—When your filial duty would have returned the unsealed papers to my hand, Discretion was what I then urged, and hoped you would adhere to;—let me not be deceived, Frederic!—Never hast thou yet swerved from a child's obedience, then do not refuse to acquiesce with my present request, nor by such an intent raise from wished oblivion the memory of thy dear deluded father's indiscretion.”

THIS, and much more to the same effect, at length extorted a faithful promise from Frederic to think no more on what appeared to give his amiable mother so much anxiety;—though I am certain no other consideration could have availed; and only the strength of filial affection, conquered the suggestions of laudable repentment.

OH! my Emily! it is impossible to describe the several emotions which appeared on his countenance when he knew the secret of his birth;—the paper, in a manner, dropped from his hand; he fixed his eyes stedfastly on me; while joy, mingled with fearful suspense, seemed to speak the utmost secrets of his soul.

HIS earnest look, so full of expressive eloquence, occasioned infinite confusion in me;—I felt my face and neck covered with a crimson glow, which he at length perceiving, withdrew in an instant those intelligent glances, and proceeded with his amiable mother's history.—When he arrived at that affecting part, which described his behaviour and innocent reply after the absence of his father, I was unable to restrain my tears,

which occasioned some tender sentiments and expressions from him;—in short, Emily, the whole was productive of many interesting circumstances; but I shall forbear dwelling on particulars, otherwise I might expect a little of my lively friend's raillery, let it suffice to say, that my swain, (to use your epithet) never since I knew him, appeared happier than at present, on my account—at least.

I SUPPOSE your penetrating Ladyship will easily guess the reason,—though I would not have you imagine I have been extravagant in encouragement—no absolute promise, Emily,—only a sufficient quantity of what remained in Pandora's box, to hinder the poor youth from sighing too much.

I RECEIVED, yesterday, a letter from my aunt Cowley, who continues at Scarborough, with her incomparable helpmate;—she informs me that he has received much benefit from the waters;—this she expresses with such abundant satisfaction, that, did I not know her incapable of deceit, I should think she betrayed a little hypocrisy by the assertion.—He is one of your northern sparks indeed, Emily!—ever lowering and turbulent to his amiable wife:—Pray heaven this indisposition may soften the brutal ferocity of his temper, and incline him more to imitate a southern aspect!—Though of this, I confess, I am rather doubtful; since, by the few observations I have been able to make, I have reason to think, that when once a man degenerates from what Providence intended him to be, and usurps the savage demeanour of a brute,—the love of tyranny prevails; and exercising it over an innocent, patient sufferer, affords such inhuman satisfaction, that cruelty and malevolence seldom ends but with life.—But enough on this disgusting theme, and let me say something of our worthy friends on the other side the copse,—though it will only consist of informing my Emily that they are well.

DONNA Clara has heard nothing either from France or Spain,—which I cannot help thinking very extraordinary.

WHERE is all the boasted friendship of Madam de Beaumont?—Alas! my Emily! how often does the most solemn profession of that sacred name vanish in air!—no traces to be seen!—Frequently do I impute the pretensions of friendship to what Doctor Goldsmith emphatically styles it;

“ A shade that follows wealth or fame,
“ But leaves the wretch to weep.”

FORGIVE me, Emily, should you judge me too severe; and be assured, notwithstanding what I have here declared, that I am sensible (though many may prostitute the heaven-born title) it really subsists between my friend and her

SYLVIA BEVERLY,

LETTER XXIX.

From the same, to the same.

SENSIBLE that happy events always give delight to the humane bosom of my Emily,—I shall relate an occurrence that happened yesterday.

DEAR Lady Silena; Frederic, and I, for the first time since our amiable mother's recovery, paid a visit at Mrs. Benson's.—It would be needless to repeat the sincere joy that was visible in every countenance on this happy occasion:—After dinner, a walk was proposed in that copse so often mentioned; which, really, Emily, appears as if decreed for a principal scene of adventures. Mrs. Benson has been at much expence to render it quite agreeable, cutting through some of the luxuriant bushes to form commodious walks, which yet appear more the effect of nature than of art. She has likewise caused to be erected, at convenient distances, rural seats, something in that artless manner with those in Lord Tilney's gardens;—they are judiciously placed under the shade of spreading oaks, which render them extremely delightful, even at the blaze of noon.

THEY proved of infinite service to dear Lady Silena, whose present weakness occasioned her frequently to rest

on those rustic benches;—on one of which, Mrs. Whitworth, and Mrs. Benson, remained with her, while Donna Clara, Frederic, myself, and little Harriot amused ourselves with walking into the thickest part of the wood, gathering honeysuckles that grew spontaneously, and twisted their fragrant branches round the supporting oaks.

THE innocent Harriot running before us, seemed the fairy queen to whom these tranquil shades belonged.

THUS calm and happy, we proceeded for some time, when, on a sudden, the sweet child came running back to us, saying, “Do not let us go any farther, there is somebody sitting on the grass.”

POOR Donna Clara, remembering her adventure with young Benson, betrayed marks of fear,—but Mr. Hamilton being with us, I was not in the least dismayed, especially at that time of day,—and therefore asked Harriot whether she would be afraid to show us where the person was;—to which she replied, with her native innocence, “No, indeed, Miss Beverly, we need not be afraid, the gentleman was reading,—I am sure he will not hurt us, but I came back for fear we should disturb him.”

BEFORE the lovely girl had well finished this speech, the stranger advanced;—he seemed about thirty, dressed in a riding suit of green and gold,—his person and deportment extremely elegant,—and I could not help applauding little Harriot’s sagacity, he appearing, at first sight, more capable of creating esteem than fear.

HE accosted us with much politeness, but seemed rather surprised, (as he afterwards confessed) to meet persons of our appearance in that obscure retreat;—taking hold of Harriot’s hand, and regarding her with much attention, he said, “My pretty creature, I hope I did not hinder you from pursuing your innocent amusement?”—“No, indeed, Sir:” (answered the lovely girl)—“Good God! (exclaimed the stranger)—the very voice also.”—Then turning to us, he said, “Excuse my rudeness, Ladies, but this beauteous child has

awakened the recollection of an event, which has caused me infinite affliction;—I almost dread to ask her name, and yet—I beg to know it.”

DONNA Clara answered, “If the name of Harriot Mortimer”——The stranger would not suffer her to proceed, but hastily demanded, if Whitworth was not the maiden name of the child’s mother?

ON being answered in the affirmative, snatching the lovely girl to his breast, he exclaimed, “It is! it is my child!—emblem of her mother’s innocence and beauty!”

BEFORE the violence of his transports were abated, Mrs. Whitworth appeared, as wondering at our stay; the enraptured Mr. Mortimer (for so he really was) soon knew the worthy woman, and was as soon recollected by her.—Infinite were the tender effusions that passed between them:—While they were thus employed, I flew to Lady Silena and Mrs. Benson, acquainting them with the happy discovery.

THE welcome stranger was soon introduced, and mutual congratulations were reciprocally exchanged; the lovely little Harriot, rejoicing to find a parent who so tenderly caressed her, exhibited the utmost raptures her innocent heart was capable of;—she clung round the neck of her transported father, then flew to her grandmother, and every one of us present, telling us all that she had found—Papa.

AFTER tea, Mrs. Whitworth begged her son-in-law to inform her, why he had suffered above five years to elapse without enquiring after his unfortunate wife? to which Mr. Mortimer replied, “My dear Madam, your being a stranger to the cruel treatment I received from my father, justifies a question that, otherwise, would give me much concern;—since the most barbarous and (I believe) unprecedented usage, that ever child suffered from a parent, was the only cause of this seeming neglect.—No, Madam, my Harriot’s image was never effaced by time or absence;—even Nature’s sympathy was not alone the reason, which agitated my bosom on the sight of my lovely child;—the well-remem-

bered features of her mother occasioned the first alarm; and when she spoke—my Harriot's voice seemed echoed by her lively accents.

“BUT (continued Mr. Mortimer) the tale is long to tell, and my present agitation will not suffer me to go through the whole this evening; permit me, therefore, a small respite, and I will inform my dear mother (respectfully kissing Mrs. Whitworth's hand) of the whole of my perplexing story.

HE would then have taken his leave, and proceeded to an inn about a mile distant, where he had left his servant and his horses;—but Mrs. Benson would not permit him to leave them, insisting on his staying with her, till such time as he had related the promised narrative at least:—Accordingly, a servant was dispatched to the inn, with notice of his remaining there, and orders to bring his small retinue to Mrs. Benson's.—This obliging invitation was politely accepted by Mr. Mortimer, and about eight o'clock we returned home, leaving this amiable family happy in the society of the welcome stranger.

ADIEU, my Emily, I hope, ere long, to satisfy the curiosity I have raised in my friend, of knowing this hero's adventure. Remember, I made frequent complaints while penning Donna Clara's story;—it now seems as if my patience was again to be exercised,—yet, in consideration of affording entertainment to my Emily, it will chearfully be performed by her S. BEVERLY.

LETTER XXX.

From the same, in Continuation.

MORE discoveries, Emily!—how incomprehensible are the secret dispensations of unerring Providence!—Occurrences frequently happen, to cast a light on the affairs of short-sighted mortals, which they deem inextricable and obscure.

Two days after our first seeing Mr. Mortimer, he obliged Mrs. Whitworth with relating the cruel treatment he had received from his father, on account of his

union with his beloved Harriot. Lady Silena, Frederic, and I being, by desire, also present, Mr. Mortimer began, addressing himself to his worthy mother as follows:

"I APPREHEND, dear Madam, it will be needless to relate how soon my heart was captivated by the charms (both personal and mental) of my Harriot; since, I suppose, my amiable auditors have heard the whole from yourself; I shall, therefore, begin at the period of six months after our clandestine union; by first informing you, that my father, being a man of haughty and contracted principles, urged me to conceal my happiness as long as possible; the paltry consideration of superior fortune influencing him beyond the more valuable endowments of beauty and intrinsic merit. From you also, Madam, we kept the important secret, tho' for contrary motives; sensible of your tenacious adherence to truth, and that you ever despised such clandestine proceedings, we feared soliciting your consent without having obtained my father's; and as that we justly concluded would be impossible,—Love, that powerful deity, disdained all thoughts of future storms; and, happy in each other, we bade defiance to calamity.

"THUS we lived for near six months, without having the least suspicion that our marriage was discovered. When one day my father told me, that my uncle, who was captain of a vessel trading to Spain, was taken extremely ill, and earnestly desired to see me before he left England. The ship then lay at Falmouth ready for sail, and therefore my father, with apparent marks of affection, said, Dear Frank, I would have you be speedy in your journey, as I am certain my brother will regard it as a breach of respect if you do not endeavour to see him before he leaves England. You know, continued he, your uncle is rich, has no family, and therefore prudence as well as duty should influence you to pay him proper attention.

"THIS speech coinciding with my father's known sentiments of lucrative expectations, left me no room to doubt of the truth of what he uttered.—Unsuspecting

therefore the least deceit, I promised to set out early the next morning for Falmouth, proposing to inform my Harriot in person of my intended journey; but of this I was disappointed, my father engaging me the whole afternoon and evening in some trifling affairs, which rendered it impossible (without giving room for that suspicion I dreaded) to effect my purpose. I however wrote a letter after I was in my own chamber, to my lovely wife, acquainting her with the whole, and promising a return with all possible expedition. 'This I gave in the morning to my own servant, (who had been entrusted with the secret of our marriage) to deliver into Harriot's own hand, but whether it was received I know not, as I was forced to leave the house before his return; though I am apt to believe the villain betrayed me, for it was impossible any other person could have informed my father of so many particulars as I too soon found, with inexpressible affliction, he had been apprised of.

" ON my arrival at Falmouth, I went on board my uncle's ship, and found him in bed in his cabin, to all appearance extremely ill.

" HE pretended infinite joy at seeing me, applauded my affectionate haste, saying, that he should ever remember it with the most parental consideration. I own I was rather surprised at all this effusion of tenderness, as he was a person I never had respected, more than being brother to my father; his disposition ever appearing brutal and morose, sordid and avaritious, frequently gave me cause to imagine that my death would not much grieve him, especially as he was the heir at law to my father, in case I died without issue; I therefore imagined his indisposition had wrought those new-acquired sentiments, and brought him to a resolution of curbing those malevolent prepossessions incident to his disposition; nay, so much did he appear my friend from this readiness to visit him, that after having been more than an hour by his bed-side, I was going to disclose my marriage, and beg my friendly uncle to be a mediator between me and my father; this I should have undoubtedly endeavour-

ed, had I not at that instant perceived by the ship's motion that she was under sail.

"SURPRISED at this accident, I rose with precipitancy to discover if my imagination did not deceive me; when my perfidious uncle on a sudden gave a whistle, and three or four sailors, who had been properly instructed, entered the cabin, and demanded their captain's pleasure; to which, with all the calmness of a thorough-paced villain, he said, Keep this young man in custody till I order you to release him.

"WORDS are too weak to describe my agitations, I however drew a hanger that hung in the cabin, and swore I would sacrifice the first man who dared to use me ill; to which one of the tars replied in the usual sea dialect; wherein he signified, that if I pretended to make the least resistance I should be put in irons.

"THEIR infamous commander was by this time dressed, approved their threats, and now appeared entirely free from any other disorder than what a brutal passion exhibited on my accusing him with perfidy.

"RESISTANCE was in vain, the hanger was wrenched from me, though not before I had given one of the sailors a deep gash on his right arm; this was returned by my cruel uncle himself, with a severe stroke on the head that almost stunned me, accompanied with an horrid oath, and d—ing me for misusing his seamen.

"I then was thrust into a small cabin adjoining to his own, and two of the sailors set as centinels over me. When I came a little to myself, I soon surmised the cause of this perfidy, and which I was assured of about an hour afterwards, by my uncle's coming to the cabin, who, throwing me a letter, bade me read it, and be d—m'd.

"WILLING to know the utmost of my wretchedness, I took the letter, which I soon perceived was in my father's hand-writing,—the contents these.

"FRANK,

"*As your imprudent and undutiful disposition engaged you, without my knowledge, to conclude an union with a beggar,—I thought it a father's duty to hinder, as much as possi-*

ble, your utter ruin;—this you hardly deserve, in consideration of your acting so clandestinely. Your uncle has full instructions from me in what manner to settle you in Spain, therefore submit as you ought, which will be some atonement for that breach of duty committed against

“ Your offended father,

“ R. MORTIMER

“ AFTER having perused this torturing epistle, gave way to all the horrors of desperation;—raved like a frantic Bedlamite, threatened my relentless centinels with that destruction I was incapable of effecting, if they did not release me; while they only laughed at my sufferings, which considerably aggravated my madness.—Sometimes I would call upon the name of my beloved Harriot,—and then break out in execration on my father, uncle, and myself;—they for betraying and I for so easily believing their perfidious artifices.—Thus I spent three hours or more, till at length Nature, unable to support the violence of my agitations, sunk into a calm;—this was succeeded by a sullen melancholy, which lasted till our arrival in Spain.

“ IT then entered my mind, on reaching the shore, to pretend a reconciliation to my fate, the better to secure my escape, which I was determined to attempt the first opportunity; for the brutal treatment I had received from my uncle while on board, left me no reason to believe I should experience better in that unknown kingdom.

“ TWO days after our landing at Cadiz, I was taken by my cruel relation (who still kept a close watch over all my actions) to Andalusia, and there recommended as a clerk to a considerable merchant, who wanted a person in his counting-house who understood English, with strong injunctions if I behaved turbulently, to send me to a factory he had in that part of America known by the name of the Spanish West Indies.

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